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A N

A T T E M P T

To Answer the Important Question,

WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?

A

P O E M,

IN THREE DIALOGUES,

B E T W E E N

PRUDENS AND EVANGELICUS.

W I T H

A N I N T R O D U C T I O N,
O N T H E W O R T H O F T H E S O U L , A N D T H E
I M P O R T A N C E O F R E L I G I O N .

By S. D E A C O N .

Know'ft thou th' Importance of a Soul immortal?
Survey this midnight Glory; Worlds on Worlds!
Amazing Pomp! redouble this Amaze;
Ten Thousand add; add twice ten Thousand more;
Then weigh the Whole—One SOUL outweighs them all.

YOUNG.

C O V E N T R Y :

Printed for the AUTHOR, by M. LUCKMAN:
And Sold by Messrs. Robinsons, Pater-noster-Row, London.

M D C C LXXXVIII.

[Price ONE SHILLING.]



P R E F A C E.

THOUGH it may seem arrogant in the author to print the following work, yet several reasons may be given which have induced him to it; among which the following are the principal:—The kind reception his hymns met with from Christians of different persuasions;—the respect he pays to the judgment of several of his most intimate friends;—but more particularly the conviction of his own mind, that it will do good to some sincere souls, who may be enquiring after salvation.

The invariable love of God to men, and the sufficiency of scripture, as a divine directory to the enquiring sinner, are truths warmly contended for in the following pages: Yet, he has been more solicitous to inflame the heart with piety, than to fill the head with argument.

The judicious reader will easily discover that this work is principally designed for the lower

class of men, who in general are fond of verse: and he will, very likely, find some low conceits, which can only suit their taste. An apostle was pleased to become all things to all men, if he might by any means gain some. This, the author hopes, will be a sufficient apology for him in this particular.

He is also aware of a defect, as some may think, in point of consistency. This he hopes is only to be found on the part of Prudens; and there it could hardly be avoided, without evading an answer of many objections, which different persons experience in their first awakenings. To obviate these objections, Prudens is sometimes permitted to change his ground.

It is probable, others may object to the doctrine with respect to free will, self-righteousness, &c. This might be expected were it ever so perfect, since the opinions of men are so various, that the Bible itself does not completely satisfy all. If he err in this respect, it is error of judgment, and he will be thankful to any person who shall endeavour to set him right. He confesses his ignorance, and need of

in-

instruction. He wishes ever to esteem those his best friends, who kindly admonish him, and teach him wisdom. But, he wishes it to be remembered, that he is here shewing the sinner what *he* must do to be saved; and not particularly what GOD will do to save him.

He heartily agrees that salvation is all of grace, without any idea of merit, or worthiness in the sinner: yet the sinner is called to repent, and to believe, in order to be saved. It was free grace which saved Lot from the destruction of Sodom, yet he must escape for his life, or be consumed! He is taught, and urged, and assisted to fly for refuge; but he is not carried to the mountain, or to Zoar, for safety. Thus would the author earnestly encourage and urge the hesitating soul,

To strive to enter at the narrow gate;
 To strive to enter, ere it be too late!
 With violence his enemies oppose;
 And with the offer of salvation close:—

Not doubting the assistance and grace of God in his endeavours after happiness. God is not

slack concerning his promise; but sinners are in general slack in attending the directions of his word, and thereby grieve his Spirit, or receive his grace in vain.

With respect to the execution, it would be almost endless to make apologies, and to answer objections. He will not attempt the one or the other. His time and talents are both from God; in his cause they ought to be employed; and how can it be done to greater advantage, than in attempting to shew sinners the way of salvation? This is the ardent desire of his heart, and the principal business for which he lives. If what he has written be calculated to this end, and made in any degree a blessing to the reader's soul; give God the glory, through Jesus Christ. *Amen.*

INTRODUCTION.

TO lessen the labour and expence, the following work begins with a person who is brought to a sense of danger, and is anxious to know what he must do to be saved. If the reader has never experienced this, it will be well for him to consider the worth of his soul, and the danger of it being lost. It is this which makes religion of importance. On any other consideration, it is comparatively of no consequence. The greatest teachers have been particularly careful to impress this on the mind; but none with a force, with a pathos, like Jesus. He, in the most feeling manner, appeals to every man's conscience, and asks, "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Plainly intimating, that this mortal life is but a mere trifle in comparison with it. "Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do. But I will forewarn you whom ye shall fear: Fear him which, after he hath killed, hath power to cast into hell; yea, I say unto you, Fear him."

An affecting sense of the worth of the soul, will make a man diligent “ to obtain salvation.” But if this be wanting, religion will be treated with indifference, as matter of amusement ; or as a political scheme to keep children, or servants, or subjects in awe.

It would be too much for an introduction, to offer a formal proof of a future state. It is hoped the reader believes his Bible to be true ; then he cannot be in doubt with respect to this. But should he question his future existence, let him attend to religion with avidity and zeal. Supposing futurity all an uncertainty, it is much the safest to be religious ; because he will be no real loser, if he die and be no more ; but should he be immortal, he will be an infinite gainer, when the irreligious person is ruined for ever !

Not that I admit it doubtful whether there be a future state, or no : there are proofs sufficient to satisfy an impartial inquiring mind, though “ the fool hath said in his heart there is no God.”

This premised, think how important it is to be happy for ever. Dare not say, “ Peace, peace,” to yourself, but as your Bible gives you encouragement. “ Many are the devices of a man’s heart, “ nevertheless the counsel of the Lord that shall “ stand.” What we are in our own eyes, or in the eyes of others, is little to the purpose. “ He “ that

“ that trusteth his own heart is a fool.” And
 “ Woe unto you when all men speak well of you.”
 “ To the law, and to the testimony ; if they speak
 “ not according to this word, it is because there is
 “ no light in them.”

Consider the value of your soul, from its capacity to enjoy or to suffer. How it can be delighted with hopes, and terrified with fears of what perhaps may never be. The happiness of brutes consists chiefly in present gratification, and their misery in present suffering : but you can derive pleasure and pain from what was done years before you was born, and from future prospects for generations to come ; as well as from objects around you, which have no immediate connection with your own personal affairs. You can rejoice in the prosperity of friends, and be afflicted with their calamities. How anxiously can a parent feel for a child, though their abode may be in different parts of the globe ! A brute has not the power of reason and reflection ; but this is a principal source of your happiness, or misery. You are capable of all the gratifications and infelicities of the brute ; but mental joys and sorrows are all your own. In these the brute has very little share.

You are not only so distinguished in point of capacity, but in duration. The period of a few years at most, will terminate an animal’s pleasure and

and pain ; but you must have a rational existence through eternal ages, and receive the fruit of your wisdom, or the reward of your folly, when the sun shall forget to shine, and the world be reduced to ashes. Duration makes pleasures, pleasures indeed ; and misery, intolerable to sustain. A violent tooth-ach, for a night, how grievous ! but to suffer for ever—the mind recoils at the dreadful thought !

The intenseness of eternal torments, calls loudly on you to be careful to shun them. “ The wicked shall be turned into hell, with all the nations that forget God.” “ An horrible pest of fire and brimstone—shall be the portion of their cup.” “ These shall go away into everlasting punishment.” Those that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, shall be punished with everlasting destruction.” Is this misery threatened to the impenitent sinner, by a God who cannot lie, and can you be indifferent about it ? Can you bear to have your soul cast into hell, where there is not one drop of water to cool your tongue ?

The very great danger of this misery, affords another motive to awaken your fears. Revelation assures us, that “ the soul that sinneth it shall die.” “ Cursed is every one that continueth not

“ in

" in all things which are written in the book of
 " the law to do them." Where is the man that
 hath not " sinned, and come short of the glory
 " of God?" " We are all as an unclean thing,
 " and all our righteousnesses are as filthy rags."
 " Every mouth must be stopped, and all the
 " world become guilty before God." If you
 have once sinned, you are under the curse of the
 law as really as if you had committed ten thousand
 iniquities; and all your future righteousness will
 not make amends for your past transgressions.
 Perfect obedience is demanded for the present mo-
 ment, and for every moment of your whole life.
 " By the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justi-
 " fied in his sight." If you live and die unpar-
 doned, unsanctified, unconverted, there is no pos-
 sibility of being happy in the world to come! ---
 " Verily, verily I say unto thee, Except a man
 " be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of
 " God."

The shortness and uncertainty of your life, is an
 alarming consideration. " At such an hour as
 " you think not, the Son of Man cometh." " When
 " they shall say, peace and safety, then sud-
 " den destruction cometh upon them." " At
 " midnight there was a cry made, behold the
 " bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him." How
 many younger than you have been cut down
 like

like a flower, and seen no more! Your reason, your health, your opportunities, your life, are all from God; and he can take them at his pleasure. While you slight his mercy, you provoke his majesty; and how, if he should "swear in his wrath, " you shall not enter into his rest?"

The importance of salvation is further manifested, by the means which God has provided to make you happy. He cannot be mistaken in the worth of your soul, because he made it; and he hath set a high value on it indeed! The Bible abounds with evidences of this: yea, this is the great reason why there is a Bible at all, that men might be "wise unto salvation, through faith in Christ Jesus." He appointed brutal sacrifices for sin; but these could never "make the comers thereunto perfect." At last he manifested such love to the world, "that he gave his only begotten Son,"—to the greatest sufferings, and the most shameful death, "that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life." Surely that soul must be precious, "for whom Christ died." It could never please the Father to bruise his own dear Son for a trifle. We cannot suppose he would lay our sins on Jesus, and make his soul an offering for them, if he had not seen it to be a matter of very great consequence for the sinner to be saved; or if the sinner could have saved

saved himself. This price was paid for your soul. Jesus has "given himself a ransom for all." It is a thing done, and therefore incontrovertible. " Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not reckoned with corruptible things, as silver and gold—but with the precious blood of Christ."

The care of God for the sinner's happiness, is further and abundantly manifested by his unbounded goodness; precious promises; serious expostulations; solemn oaths; general and generous calls, scattered through the sacred scriptures: as though he could not be happy, if we were miserable. It must be a heart of stone, of steel, that can read them with attention, and not feel their force, and be affected with them.

Is God then so concerned for your salvation, and will you be indifferent about it? If his abhorrence of sin be so great, as to give up his own Son to crucifixion, who voluntarily bore it "in his own body on the tree;" how can the sinner expect mercy at his hands, who persists in his iniquities, and neglects so great salvation? O what

Tempests of angry fire shall roll,
To blast the rebel worm;
And beat upon his naked soul,
In one eternal storm!

WATTS.

If this, dear reader, should be your case; what would you then give for pardon and eternal life? when

when all the gratifications of sense are gone! when all the pleasures of sin are vanished! when gospel opportunities are no more! when “ Hell from beneath is moved to meet thee at thy coming!” Heaven, with all its joys and glories in sight, but at an infinite distance from thee! Jesus, who once died on a cross for thy transgressions, now coming to be thy judge, to denounce the decisive sentence, “ Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, “ prepared for the devil and his angels!”

Oh! what unknown terrors will seize thy guilty soul, if this should be thy case! And is it not possible? is it not certain, if you die unconverted?—If there be any truth in the Bible, this will be the state of some; and, it is much to be feared, of many; for “ wide is the gate, and broad is the way, “ that leadeth to destruction; and many there be “ which go in thereat:”

But, perhaps, you are earnestly enquiring after salvation; longing to be ““ made free from sin.” If so, you may read the following pages to advantage. Through the divine blessing, you may find Jesus to be such a Saviour as your state requires. In them I have endeavoured to represent him as every way suitable to the sinner’s wants; and to lead the poor heavy-laden soul to him. This is the current language of scripture, “ Believe on the Lord “ Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” “ The “ gift

“ gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ
“ our Lord.”

If you are but heartily willing to be saved in
God's own way, and attend with diligence to the
means of instruction he graciously gives; there is
but little difficulty or danger: for Jesus “ is able
“ to save them to the uttermost that come to God
“ by him.” And now he without ceasing cries,
“ Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy
“ laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke
“ upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and
“ lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your
“ souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is
“ light.” “ Him that cometh to me, I will in no
“ wise cast out.”

The favour of God, and the joys of heaven, are
not obtained at great expence; but “ without
“ money, and without price.” “ Let the wicked
“ forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his
“ thoughts: and let him return to the Lord, and
“ he will have mercy upon him; and to our God,
“ for he will abundantly pardon.” He, the great
Governor of the world, sends his ambassadors to
every creature, to pray them — “ to be reconciled
“ to God.” To tell them that he hath made Je-
sus “ to be sin for them,—that they might be
“ made the righteousness of God in him.”

Come

Come then, poor trembling creature, guilty as thou art, to Jesus ! He will receive thee, and make thee happy. It is the delight of his heart, and the business of his life, “ to seek and to save that “ which was lost.” He came into the world to save even the chief of sinners. We have the authority of God to say, “ Be it known unto you,— “ that through this man is preached unto you the “ forgiveness of sins: And by him all that believe “ are justified from all things.”

Ye poor guilty creatures, whoever you are,
Forgiveness of sins unto you we declare :
Through Jesus the Saviour there's pardon made known ;
Believe on his name, and the pardon's your own.
Whatever your nature, your sins, or your case,
'Tis to you, 'tis to you, 'tis to all the lost race !
O ! sinners believe, and the gospel embrace.

This is the only way to be safe: this is the only way to be happy : for “ there is salvation in none “ other.” If you try a thousand schemes, no-
thing will avail but faith in Jesus. It is still writ-
ten, “ He that believeth not, is condemned alre-
“ dy ;”—“ shall not see life ;”—“ the wrath of
“ God abideth on him ;”—“ shall be damned.”
But, “ being justified by faith, we have peace
“ with God, through our Lord Jesus Christ.”
We have also peace in our own souls ; the ways of
Wisdom, of religion, are ways of pleasantness, and
paths

paths of peace. Believers on Jesus, “ have re-
“ demption through his blood, even the forgive-
“ ness of sins;” and are “ justified from all
“ things.” God is their father;—Christ is their
advocate;—the Holy Ghost is their comforter;—
the Bible is their charter;—and the world of glory
their eternal home. They “ are kept by the
“ power of God, through faith unto salvation.”
And “ when Christ, who is their life, shall appear,
“ then shall they also appear with him in glory.”
“ It is their Father’s good pleasure to give them
“ the kingdom.”

Is it possible for you to be thus safe and happy; and will you trifle with the means, as though it were matter of indifference whether heaven or hell be your eternal abode? God forbid! Surely your natural desire to be happy, and capacity for eternal bliss—the terrors which await the ungodly, and the joys prepared for the righteous—the invitations of God, and the dreadful sufferings of Jesus—the richness, freeness, and suitableness of the gospel; and the utter impossibility of being happy without its blessings;—will drive, will draw you to seek after “ the things that belong to your peace,” lest they should soon, and for ever “ be hid from your eyes.” But,

If you still remain impenitent, and trifle with your soul; your own soul; your only soul; and

spend your precious moments in vanity and sin ;
 and will not seriously enquire what you must do to
 be saved ;— who can help you ? Men cannot save
 you. Angels cannot save you. God cannot save
 you, without falsifying his word— “ Except you
 “ repent, you must perish.” There is no other
 alternative. If you trifle with God, he will not
 trifle with you. You cannot deceive him. You
 cannot bribe him. You cannot conquer him.
 You cannot shun him. If neither favours nor
 frowns will humble thy rebellious heart, there only
 remains “ a certain fearful looking for of judg-
 “ ment, and fiery indignation, which shall devour
 “ the adversary.” Your state is deplorable be-
 yond expression !

“ Could Angels tremble ; 'twere at such a sight.”

But know thou, that if the report of these things
 will not wake thee ; the experience of them will.
 If you can sleep in sin, you cannot sleep in hell !—

Sinners, awake betimes ; ye fools, be wise ;
 Awake before this dreadful morning rise ;
 Change your vain thoughts, your crooked works amend,
 Fly to the Saviour, make the Judge your friend :
 Then join the saints : wake ev'ry cheerful passion ;
 When CHRIST returns, he comes for your salvation.

WATTS.

A N

AN
A T T E M P T, &c.

D I A L O G U E I.

A R G U M E N T.

Prudens takes a walk one summer evening, and contemplating the beauties of creation, falls into a soliloquy on his own state as a sinner.—Evangelicus happens to hear him, and enquires the cause of his trouble.—Prudens acquaints him, that dreadful thunder brought him to serious self-examination, and he found himself lost, and wants to know what he must do to be saved.—Evangelicus tells him that he had been in a similar case, and found rest in believing on Jesus; and advises him to the same expedient.—Prudens fears he may not, on account of his long delay.—Evangelicus thews him, by many arguments, that his fears of this sort are groundless.—Prudens starts several objections, and asks questions concerning the extent of the death of Christ, repentance, wrath of God, &c. which Evangelicus endeavours to obviate, and answer.—Prudens concludes to go home and meditate on the discourse, and to come again the next day.—Evangelicus approves of his proposal, and advises him to act accordingly.

P R U D E N S.

HOW lovely nature! how divinely gay!
In all the rich variety of May.
Nothing defective, or redundant, seen;
Her rivers argent, and her meadows green.

So consummate her beauty ! all around—
Deck'd like a goddess—like a goddess crown'd.

What charming objects catch the straying eye !
What fragrant sweets on ev'ry zephyr fly !
What pleasing harmony salutes the ear !
What order, and what elegance appear
Throughout the whole ! what workmanship and
No sense, but meets a delicate repast. [taste !

The glorious luminary, source of day,
Marches with dignity his western way :
While gentle breezes whisper o'er the plain,
To sooth and cherish the laborious swain.
The cattle grazing in the spacious mead :
The flocks in forests, and on mountains feed :
The lark, with notes melodious, upwards flies,
To pay her evening homage to the skies :
While birds of humble note, and tardy wing,
Fly to the covert, and in woodlands sing :
All innocent, all happy ; all combine
To praise their Maker.—But this soul of mine,—
Low, and dejected with foreboding fears,
Can take no pleasure in the notes she hears.

Alas ! far other strains to me belong ;
Far other accents labour on my tongue :
Weeping and lamentation if I sing,
Must be the only tribute which I bring.
The quadruped, the reptile, and the fly,
Fill up their station better far than I.

The end of their creation these obey,
 And serve their Maker, serve him all their day :
 And when he bids them die—at his desire,
 Without a murmur, they in peace expire :
 While I (who unknown benefits receive)
 Am neither fit to die, nor fit to live.

E V A N G E L I C U S.

What is the matter, neighbour Prudens, now ?
 I little thought that such a man as you
 Would fill the grove with melancholy strains,
 And spoil the concert of these happy plains.
 What is the matter ? late I heard you sing,
 In notes melodious, the approaching spring.

P R U D E N S.

O, Evangelicus ! you cannot guess
 The dreadful cause of my severe distress.
 I little thought, a little time ago,
 That I should feel my spirits sink so low :
 But dreadful thunder, and the lightning's blaze,
 Brought me to ponder on my works and ways ;
 To see (if instant death should prove my lot),
 Whether I was prepar'd to die, or not :
 And, to the terror of my soul, I found
 My hopes erected on fallacious ground :
 And that's the reason of my fears and grief :—
 O ! can you tell me where to find relief ?

EVANGELICUS.

I once was in your very, very case!
 I felt the anguish that you now express.
 My sins appear'd in terrible array ;
 And nature indicated judgment-day.
 O ! with what boding horrors was I fill'd !—
 I thought my final mittimus was seal'd,
 And officers of justice stood to bear
 My frightened soul to regions of despair.

I work'd and labour'd ; but no peace obtain'd.
 I pray'd and fasted ; but no comfort gain'd.
 I read the Bible, and the Fathers too ;
 And still the anguish of my spirit grew.
 I went to public worship ; and when there,
 My soul seem'd stupid, overborne with care :
 And like a statue in the place I stood,
 While Fides preach'd—“ Behold the Lamb of God.”
 And O ! 'twas happy that I went : I see
 Faith comes by hearing ; and it came to me.
 I saw the Lamb of God was able still,
 To rescue sinners from the gates of hell.
 I saw his love was most divinely free.
 I saw his love and pity reach'd to me.
 This I believ'd ; and in believing, felt
 Eas'd of my burden, caus'd by sin and guilt.
 This is the Saviour, this the blessed Friend,
 I to poor sinners always recommend.
 His grace is quite sufficient now for you :
 If you believe it—you'll be happy too.

P R U D E N S.

Dear Evangelicus, don't lead me wrong :
 His love and mercy I've neglected long.
 And can I to him for salvation go,
 When conscious I abus'd his mercy so ?

E V A N G E L I C U S.

Yes, Prudens, yes ; and that's the only way,
 To shun the terrors which your soul dismay.
 His love is quite unsearchable and free.
 His tender mercies lengthen out to thee.
 His gracious arms are ever open wide.
 Those are secure who in his grace confide.

P R U D E N S.

This is good tidings, if you can but prove
 What you assert of the Redeemer's love.

E V A N G E L I C U S.

Dear Prudens, canst thou want a proof of this ?
 Behold the conduct of the Prince of Peace,
 In ev'ry age of time, in ev'ry place ;
 And say, canst thou distrust the Saviour's grace ?
 Behold from heaven the Lord of Glory came !
 Angels the tidings of his birth proclaim.
 The shepherds saw, and testify'd abroad,
 The loving-kindness of their gracious God.
 The eastern sages, guided by his star,
 Came to adore him with their gold and myrrh.

O ! trace him from the stable to the tree,
 And think when he neglected such as thee.
 He wanted nothing that we had for him :
 To seek and save lost sinners was his aim.
 He therefore went about from place to place,
 To prove by miracles his power and grace.
 And now he waits, I verily believe,
 That Prudens may his love and grace receive.

P R U D E N S.

O ! could I think so, all my fears would fly ;
 And I should triumph, I should leap for joy.
 Can you believe the Saviour loves me so ?
 Tell me, dear Evan, plainly, how you know ?

E V A N G E L I C U S.

The purpose of the Father when he sent him.
 The ends for which the prophets represent him.
 The gracious tidings he so oft exprest.
 The promise to the heavy-laden—rest.
 The great commission; his important charge,
 To preach the gospel to the world at large.
 The goodness of his heart and disposition,
 Are seen in ev'ry action and expression.
 These evidently prove his love and grace,
 And surely comprehend my Pruden's case.
 These arguments, like stars which cheer the night,
 Conspire to set the wand'ring sinner right.

But

But one more strong and vigorous appears,
 Bright as the sun above the moon and stars :
 And that's the price, the wond'rous price he gave
 For their redemption, whom he came to save.

To bring thy soul, poor sinner, home to God,
 He paid a ransom, and the price was blood.
 Blood, not of bulls, or goats, or heifers slain.
 Blood, not of armies murder'd on the plain.
 Blood, not of martyrs who have bravely stood,
 And stedfastly resisted unto blood.
 'Twas blood which pleaded, and for pardon cry'd :
 His own heart's blood, that issu'd from his side.
 This was the price, the ransom price for all :
 And if you doubt it, read the works of Paul.
 Not one in all the world can Evan shew,
 For whom the Saviour dy'd, if not for you.

PRUDENS.

Evan, 'tis quite presumptuous to suppose,
 He came from heaven to suffer for his foes.—
 Your friendship and your fervour are so great ;
 You quite mistake your neighbour, and his state.

EVANGELICUS.

No ; Prudens is a sinner, that is plain ;
 And Jesus was for none but sinners slain.
 For these alone the Lord was crucify'd :
 For these, without distinction, Jesus dy'd.

P R U D E N S.

You quite surprize me, Evan; and I fear
 The consequence, if you the doctrine clear.
 Yet if it be a truth, I wish to know
 What arguments you have to prove it so?

E V A N G E L I C U S.

Reason itself will give assistance here,
 But revelation makes the matter clear :
 And more especially when we take in,
 That Jesus dy'd a sacrifice for sin.

A righteous man is not expos'd to die :
 The law will all his actions justify.
 Pardon to such would be absurd indeed ;
 And more absurd if Jesus for him bleed.
 But, if a man the law of God transgress,
 He plunges into trouble and distress.
 He wants a friend to undertake his cause,
 To screen him from the sentence of the laws.

P R U D E N S.

You rather miss my meaning, or at least
 My meaning was not properly exprest.
 There's not a righteous man below the skies ;
 Yet all, are not alike his enemies.
 Some are so vile to trample on his blood ;
 While others are comparatively good.
 Now these, my Evan, these must be the men,
 For whom the Saviour dy'd and rose again.

E V A N .

EVANGELICUS.

For these he suffer'd, and for these he dy'd;
 This obvious truth can never be deny'd.
 But are these all, for whom the Saviour bled?
 Surely, my Prudens, you are better read.
 If these are all the Saviour had in view,
 What must become of Evan, and of you?
 Poor Magdalene, on such a scheme as this,
 Had but a slender ground for happiness.
 If these comparatively good were all,
 What must become of Peter, and of Paul?
 With thousands more, perhaps as vile as they,
 Who hear the gospel, and its sound obey?

PRUDENS.

Those very wicked, which you represent,
 Sinn'd through infirmity, but not intent.
 Through zeal for God the poor deluded Jews,
 The Lord of Glory shamefully abuse.
 Saul was a man devout in what he knew,
 But being misinform'd, the Christians slew.
 So in the rest, I rather think you'll find,
 They err'd through blindness, not a vicious mind.

EVANGELICUS.

In part I think your observation's right;
 I hear your palliation with delight.
 Candour will find the best excuse it can,
 For the worst actions of the vilest man.

Yet

Yet Prudens must allow their spirit bad,
 When they proclaim themselves exceeding mad.
 And more so, when he hears them breathing out
 Threatnings and slaughter furiously about.

But then the end you seem to have in view,
 I never can admit as safe, and true.
 There's no account in all the book of God,
 That Jesus dy'd to save the almost good.
 Those that were lost, the chief of sinners there,
 As objects of the Saviour's love appear.

If those with righteous views, and good intent,
 Are all the persons, all the sinners meant ;
 Who can with confidence the call obey,
 But such whose hearts have never gone astray ?

P R U D E N S.

That difficulties rise, I plainly see :
 This matter is too wonderful for me.
 Yet it appears quite random to suppose
 That Jesus dy'd on purpose for his foes.

E V A N G E L I C U S.

Indeed he did—when enemies to God,
 He reconcil'd us by his precious blood.
 Scarce for the righteous will a person die ;
 Yet for a good man—some would almost try.
 But God commends his love to wretched men,
 In bruising Jesus for the sinner, when
 He look'd upon his Maker as his foe,
 And run with eagerness for endless woe.

P R U D E N S.

At this rate, Evan, where'll you find the man
For whom the Lord of Glory was not slain ?

E V A N G E L I C U S.

I never did, and think I never shall
Be able to discover one at all.

The Bible says, (if what it says be true)
He dy'd for all. And search its pages through ;
There cannot be a single passage brought,
In which we find the contradiction taught.

P R U D E N S.

From such a notion consequences rise,
Quite inconsistent, of prodigious size.

E V A N G E L I C U S.

With consequences I have nought to do.
Let men be liars, but Jehovah true.
What God declares, I venture to believe ;
Though far beyond my reason to conceive.
'Tis from the Bible, and from nought beside,
That men can learn for whom the Saviour dy'd.
And here we're told that Jesus dy'd for all,
In language plain and unequivocal.
And those who can dispute this truth away,
May controvert whatever God shall say.

P R U D E N S.

Then surely all the world must be forgiven,
And all together rise at last to heaven.

EVAN-

E V A N G E L T C U S.

I never find a sinner set aside,
 Because for him the Saviour never dy'd.
 Nor do I ever find one welcom'd in,
 Merely because the Saviour dy'd for sin.
 The gospel must be preach'd, that men may hear
 How to be sav'd from infinite despair.
 And all that would the benefit receive,
 Must in the name of Jesus Christ believe.
 And those who will not stoop to take it so,
 Must go without it to eternal woe.
 He that believes on him is not condemn'd :
 But sinners who believe not, shall be damn'd.

P R U D E N S.

If Jesus dy'd for all, as you suppose ;
 Wicked as well as righteous, friends and foes :
 If all alike are welcome to receive
 Eternal life whenever they believe :
 The door of paradise is open wide,
 For all the sons of violence and pride.

E V A N G E L I C U S.

If these shall hear the word, and it obey ;
 Who dare presume to bid them keep away.
 These are as precious in the sight of God,
 As those who think themselves so very good.
 Their right to Jesus is as great as thine ;
 And thine, dear Prudens, is as great as mine.

'Tis

'Tis all of grace—there's nothing of desert,
 To give a title to the whole, or part.
 The wages of the smallest sin is death.
 We all by nature are the sons of wrath.
 But here's the antidote to ease our grief,
 The gift of God is everlasting life.
 Through Jesus Christ the Lord he pours around,
 Immortal benefits, on mortal ground ;
 That all his creatures, rational and free,
 May reap a harvest for eternity.

Then be it known to all the human race,
 Jesus hath suffer'd in the sinner's place :
 And whosoever in his name believes,
 Complete remission of his sins receives.
 This is the voice of God, the gospel still.
 Prudens may have the blessing if he will.

P R U D E N S.

Repentance, Evan, you omit to mention ;
 Either on purpose, or through inattention.
 I cannot have a right to Jesus' blood,
 'Till I repent, and turn myself to God.

E V A N G E L I C U S.

Without repentance, I most freely own,
 The sinner must for ever be undone.
 Now what, my Prudens, do you apprehend
 The fittest mean to bring about this end ?

P R U D E N S.

A sense of sin, and of its dreadful pow'r,
 To sink the soul to hell for evermore :
 Where they must lie beneath Jehovah's rod,
 And feel the indignation of their God.
 If this wont make them tremble and repent,
 I don't know what their ruin can prevent.

E V A N G E L I C U S.

A terror of the mind, a dread of wrath ;
 The sorrow of the world, which worketh death ;
 From desperation often will arise,
 And fill the soul with unknown agonies.
 But this is not repentance unto life ;
 'Tis wild vexation, and an inward strife.
 This makes him further from his Maker fly ;
 And madly leap the precipice, and die.

True faith in Jesus only is the thing,
 From which repentance properly can spring.
 This brings the soul with sorrow to adore
 The God it only trembled at before.
 This breaks the stony heart, and makes it bleed ;
 From which the tears of penitence proceed.
 This brings the sinner to the throne of grace,
 And melts him down before his Maker's face.
 It fills him with remorse, and grief, and shame ;
 And kindles in his heart a holy flame,
 Which burns up sin, and vanity, and pride ;
 And leaves him nothing—but Christ crucify'd.

P R U D E N S.

Here, Evan, I can scarcely hold with you,
Because you leave the sinner nought to do.

E V A N G E L I C U S.

What can the creature do, when dead in sin? 10
What can he do to make his conscience clean?
Should tears of penitence in oceans flow,
And drown him in a briny flood of woe;
That makes no recompence to God at all;
Nor heaves the burden from his guilty soul:
The curse with all its terrors on him lies;
He, as a rebel, if not pardon'd, dies.

P R U D E N S.

Admit repentance no atonement makes;
Yet the great God for this compassion takes.
The wicked Ninevites, and Ahab too,
Loudly proclaim this observation true.

E V A N G E L I C U S.

I feel the weight of what you now declare;
These passages their testimony bear,
That God is most indulgent to his foes,
And longs to save them from eternal woes.
He sends his servants, and he sends his word,
To move poor guilty souls to seek the Lord.
When vengeance hovers o'er a sinful land,
Aiming destruction with a mighty hand;

C

If

If sinners but an humbled spirit shew,
Mercy is there to intercept the blow.

Yet suffer me a small remark to make,
To rectify a capital mistake.
You seem to think the Deity possess'd
Of angry passions, and a broiling breast* ;
And those who would be objects of his care,
Must sooth him with their penitence and pray'r ;
And hereby work upon him to relent,
To save them from impending punishment.
But such a thought of Deity as this,
Would spoil his nature, and destroy his bliss.

As

* Those passages of scripture, which speak of God being angry, &c. seem to be in compliance with our weakness, and to work on our passions, rather than to prove that he is agitated with such painful sensations ; which, as far as we can judge, must make him miserable, if strictly true ; as well as appear to contradict other passages, which speak more particularly of the divine nature. Perhaps, they are also meant to teach us the great evil of sin, which deserves and incurs a weight of vengeance, as awful as though God was furiously plunging sinners into hell ; and with his own hand tormenting them with everlasting destruction. 'Tis of small consequence to the criminal who must die for his crimes, whether the king who signed his dead-warrant was in a good humour, or a bad one ; but it is of great consequence to the sinner to know that his maker is a God ready to pardon—long-suffering—not willing that any should perish :—that he hath given Jesus, who is able, and willing, and ready to save them to the uttermost who come to God by him. This the bible abundantly proves, and therefore leaves the impenitent creature absolutely without excuse.

As soon might George be troubled on his throne,
To hear an emmet with its burden groan ;
As God be ruffled, and disturb'd within,
To see the nations swallow'd up in sin.

If all the fiends below, and men on earth,
Could agitate the DEITY with wrath ; }
They'd then be able to create a hell,
And plunge JEHOVAH in its flames—to dwell, }
As long as they could vex him, or rebel.
But all the blasphemies they pour around,
Like stones thrown upwards—tumble to the }
ground,
And only those, who dare to hurl them, wound.
He sees the rebels in their dark abyss ;
But all they suffer never hurts his bliss.
His happiness admits of no alloy
From everlasting—to eternity.

PRUDENS.

If he's no anger to be turn'd away,
Why then exhorted to repent and pray ?

EVANGELICUS.

Anger there is, and terrible to bear :
Woe to the man that shall his anger dare.
Better for him if he had not been born,
Than treat the anger of his God with scorn.
The rebels doom'd to everlasting pain,
Endure his anger, and his wrath sustain.

But, then this anger cannot swell and move
 Within the Deity ; for God is love.
 Wherever anger rages in the breast,
 The mind is agitated, cannot rest.
 And can the blessed God, the source of bliss,
 Be troubled with a temper such as this ?
 No, Prudens, no ; yet, if you don't repent,
 Your sins procure eternal banishment.
 Sin separates from God, and hides his face :
 Though he is happy, you are in disgrace.
 However God may feel himself within,
 You feel the dreadful consequence of sin,
 Which, like a load of unremitting wrath,
 Will press you down in agonies of death,
 Without a beam of hope, or moment's ease,
 In fiery billows, and in burning seas.

Now God, in mercy to thy ruin'd soul *,
 Appoints the means to make the sinner whole.

There

* A father, disposed to bestow favours on his children, expects, and even waits till they manifest a proper temper ; and will sometimes use the rod to bring them to it ; not out of aversion, but real compassion : and if this temper is not discernable, he will deprive them of the intended benefit, and bestow it on others : not because he is angry, but to maintain his just authority. This is the Almighty's conduct in many instances. In the admirable parable of the prodigal son, the divine goodness is finely displayed— The father waits to make his creature happy ; yet he does not follow him to the far country ; does not send servants to fetch him home ;

There wants no alteration in his mind ;
 His disposition leads him to be kind.
 The works of nature, and the worlds above,
 Loudly proclaim his very essence Love.
 Immortal blessings issue from his throne,
 As light and heat come teeming from the sun.
 From hence proceed the riches of his grace,
 Through ev'ry dispensation, age, and place.
 This is the spring from whence they ever flow,
 Through all the universe—above—below.
 This was the reason that he sent his Son
 To die for crimes, which you and I have done.
 This is the reason that he sends around,
 Life, and salvation, in the gospel sound.
 From hence the crouds of blessings we enjoy
 For body, spirit, time, eternity.

P R U D E N S.

Evan, my error I begin to see :
 The alteration must be found in me.

C 3

I am

home ; nor does he supply his necessities there ; but suffers him to sink into poverty, disgrace, and extreme want. This brings the prodigal to himself, to reflect on his own folly, and the blessings of his father's house — to resolve to arise, and go to his father with the deepest humility. The father sees him—runs to meet him—and in the most endearing manner consoles and supplies him with every necessary and agreeable thing. The enmity is in the sinner's heart, and not in the heart of God : hence the necessity of the sinner being converted, or born again.

I am the sinner, I have gone astray;
 Wild as a prodigal, made all away :
 Expos'd myself to everlastiag pain :
 Perish I must, unless I turn again.
 But, I have been so long a slave to sin—
 I almost question—if he'll take me in.

EVANGELICUS.

Art thou a prodigal? hear Jesus then,
 Kindly invite, allure thee home again ;
 And represent the Father's tender care
 To shew the sinner's hearty welcome there.
 Art thou dispos'd to shun eternal woe ?
 Arise, dear Prudens, to thy Father go.
 He runs to meet his son a long way off,
 And entertains him with the fatted calf.
 When destitute of ev'ry decent thing,
 He decorates him with the robe and ring.
 'Tis his delight, his nature, to bestow ;
 As suns to shine, as rivulets to flow.
 Whatever thou canst want, he will provide ;
 Nothing to do thee good shall be deny'd.

PRUDENS.

O! that I could return to God to-day ;
 But I'm a perfect stranger to the way.
 So dark I feel, so chain'd to things below,
 I know not how to stir, nor where to go.

EVANGELICUS.

Christ is the way, by which to turn again.
 Christ is the door for thee to enter in.
 Jesus as Mediator stands alone,
 To introduce thee at his Father's throne.
 Believe on Jesus with a heart sincere,
 And he'll present thee with acceptance there.
 'Tis his employment, and his heart is bent
 To bring about this glorious event.
 There's nothing in the world delights him so,
 As saving sinners from eternal woe.
 For this he suffer'd on a shameful tree,
 To set thy soul from condemnation free.

PRUDENS.

If this be true, why don't I peace receive?

EVANGELICUS.

The only reason is, you don't believe.

PRUDENS.

The things you recommend I don't dispute.

EVANGELICUS.

And yet, my Prudens, you remain in doubt.

PRUDENS.

Because, dear Evan, I can hardly see
 How Christ, so long ago, should die for me.

EVANGELICUS.

All things are possible with God, and he
 At once beheld what ev'ry man would be ;
 And in his wisdom preparation made,
 To give the whole creation timely aid.

No sooner did iniquity appear,
 But sinners tidings of a Saviour hear.
 By promises, and metaphors foretold,
 Christ was exhibited in days of old.
 Till at the last, the Father sent his Son,
 To execute the covenant begun.

Then in due time, the Father on him laid
 All our iniquities, and kindly made
 Him to be sin for us, that we might be,
 From sin, and all its consequences, free,

Not merely to redeem the Jewish race ;
 But once for all, in ev'ry age and place.
 'Tis matter of indifference to God,
 Whether we liv'd before, or since the flood ;
 And to the Saviour ; Jesus dy'd for us,
 As sure as those who nail'd him to the cross,
 Sinners in ev'ry age, in ev'ry place,
 May all behold him, and enjoy his grace.
 He tasted death for all, for ev'ry man,
 To the conclusion of creation's plan.

The saints of old look'd forward with delight ;
 Now in reflection we enjoy the sight ;

And

And all alike have int'rest in his death,
 Who look to Jesus with an eye of faith.
 Past, and to come, belong to me and you ;
 But with the Lord Jehovah, all is now.
 He sees at once in his capacious mind,
 All matters relative to all mankind.
 The great stupendous WHOLE, from first to last,
 He saw minutely—ere his fiat pass'd.

Therefore on this, my Prudens, rest secure ;
 Jesus hath dy'd to make thy pardon sure.
 He suffer'd once to rescue thee from woe :
 It matters not how long it is ago.

P R U D E N S.

Pardon me, Evan, if I smile to hear
 You speak of God's omniscience—was you there ? }

E V A N G E L I C U S.

No, Prudens, but the scriptures make it clear.
 Before that man his Maker disobey'd ;
 Before the first foundation stone was laid ;
 Christ as a Lamb in covenant was slain,
 To bring the sinner to his God again.
 With him a day is as a thousand years ;
 A thousand years but as a day appears.

Mechanics, when they make a nice machine,
 Take all its parts, its powers, and motions in :
 And sure the author of the earth and sky,
 Could see minutely through a week's employ :

Or

Or his fore-knowledge was inadequate,
 This curious macrocosm to create :
 Which cannot be suppos'd, but we must be
 Guilty of mean, of mental blasphemy.
 'Tis necessary to his very nature,
 To know the circumstances of his creature.
 And well for us that he provision makes,
 And gave his Son a ransom for our sakes.
 This firm foundation God himself hath laid ;
 Prudens may trust it, and not be afraid.

P R U D E N S.

Dear Evan, I am lost, yet think I see,
 Surely there is encouragement for me !
 But how to reach the blessing, make it mine—
 Is past my comprehension —

E V A N G E L I C U S.

— It is thine ;

At least in offer ; God the Father gave it ;
 And now the Saviour presses thee to have it.
 The showers of autumn, or the vernal dew,
 Are not more free than grace and heaven to you.
 'Tis unbelief which keeps you at a distance,
 And urges Prudens still to make resistance.
 The Father yearns to make you truly blest.
 The Saviour promises to give you rest.
 The Spirit waits, and calls from day to day,
 Come to the fountain, drink without delay.

O,

O, come to Jesus ! trust him as thy Saviour :
Grieve him no longer with thy shy behaviour.

P R U D E N S.

You cannot think how very dark I'm grown :
I feel as stupid as a stock, or stone.
Though what you say I rather think is true ;
I've neither eyes to see, nor will to do.

E V A N G E L I C U S.

What if a vail now hide the face of day ;
Turn to the Lord, he'll take the vail away.
Though now you feel your understanding dark,
Without one ray, without one single spark ;
He, the great Sun of Righteousness, shall shine,
And pour down on you floods of light divine.

Though now you find your very will deprav'd ;
By carnal appetites, by fiends enslav'd :
Deny yourself, and to the Saviour go ;
A taste of his redeeming love will draw
Your soul to love him, and to love his law : }
You'll find his Holy Spirit work in you
A disposition both to will, and do.

P R U D E N S.

Dear Evangelicus ! it gives me pain,
This stupid opposition to maintain :
And yet I feel such diffidence and fear,
In closing with the blessed truths I hear.

What

What are the terms on which I may possess
This grace, and favour, you so warmly press?

EVANGELICUS.

What are the terms, when desolate and poor,
You serve a fellow-creature at your door?

PRUDENS.

No terms at all; I see his case with grief,
And out of pity give him some relief.
Pleas'd, when I think the favour does him good:
I want no recompence but gratitude.

EVANGELICUS.

Your heart bestows before your arm's extended;
And if he wont receive it, you're offended.

Just so, dear Prudens, does a God of love;
His sacred bowels with compassion move:
He graciously a blessed feast prepares;
And calls us ardently to take our shares.
Here's honey, milk, and wine, and bread, and meat,
For hungry sinners to receive, and eat:
All that is pleasant to the appetite;
All that can satisfy, and give delight:
And all for nothing—without pains, or cost,
Freely provided for the poor, and lost.
This is the feast will satisfy your need,
And this alone, for 'tis a feast indeed.

Where's

Where's there a banquet for a king to eat,
Can stand in competition with this treat ?

Should ev'ry creature in the world be sought :
Should ev'ry precious article be bought :
And all the wisdom of the world unite,
To make it pleasant to the appetite.
When all is done which can by art be done ;
What is't if you compare it with the SON—
The SON of GOD !— His very heart's delight,
Who sat resplendent in his Father's sight ;
Yet left his kingdom, and his glory too,
To give his flesh and blood for me and you !

P R U D E N S.

Meaner than husks which starving hogs refuse,
To the rich viands stately monarchs choose !

Could I but feel a hungering divine ;
Could I but know the privilege was mine,
Not all the dainties in the world would be
So sweet, so good, so nourishing to me !

E V A N G E L I C U S.

Could I but know—What would you wish to know ?
What would you have the Lord of glory do ?
He came from heaven to languish on a tree :
He sends his gospel to the world—to thee !
He bids his messengers aloud proclaim,
Salvation to the vilest through his name !

The

The Spirit and the Bride continue still
 To call with ardor whosoever will.
 What more can Jesus on a world bestow?
 And yet my Prudens cries—Could I but know!

When did the Saviour pass a sinner by?
 When did the great Redeemer tell a lie?
 When did he hesitate, dear Prudens, say,
 To rescue sinners, either night or day?
 That thou should'st dare to question his design,
 When Jesus calls thee to a feast divine!

Who can you think the Saviour had in view,
 If not despairing prodigals like you?
 For whom canst thou imagine Jesus dy'd,
 If not for thee?—Why was he crucify'd?—
 To save the righteous? that could never be.
 And if it were for sinners, why not thee?

O, Prudens! cast thy unbelief away;
 Come to the Saviour, as thou art, to-day:
 No kind of opposition need'st thou fear;
 The hungry soul is always welcome here.

What says my Prudens to this heavenly treat?
 If he be hungry, let him freely eat.
 Jehovah calls, and promises to give.
 Here him, believe him—and thy soul shall live.

P R U D E N S.

Surely, my Evan, I'm become a brute,
 That I should entertain or feel a doubt.

I'll

I'll go and meditate on what you've said ;
 You'll ask the Deity to give me aid.
 To-morrow, if to-morrow's not too late,
 Prudens on Evan will be glad to wait.

EVANGELICUS.

Your choice, my friend, I heartily approve ;
 Go ponder, ponder, on the Saviour's love.
 A soul immortal never can attend
 On better subject, than to comprehend
 The wond'rous breadth, and length, and depth,
 and height
 Of Jesus' love : 'twill fill you with delight ;
 'Twill raise your heart from this terrestrial clod,
 To trust, to hope, to triumph in your God.
 To-morrow, Prudens, if you'll please to come,
 Evan will gladly wait for you at home.

DIA-

DIALOGUE II.

ARGUMENT.

Prudens censures vain compliments.—Evangelicus concurs, and asks the state of his mind.—Prudens is unsettled, and inquires if Evangelicus be so.—Evangelicus allows he is when he lives by sense, and not by faith.—Prudens wants to know the difference.—Evangelicus explains and illustrates it.—Prudens is still unhappy.—Evangelicus tells him the cause is unbelief.—Mutual discourse concerning faith, divine and human. Means by which it is obtained.—Evangelicus recommends the Bible as the great mean.—Prudens approves in part; acknowledges his mind convinced, yet cannot believe.—Evangelicus charges him with absurdity; points out his mistake, and proposes a respite for meditation.—Pause.—The subject resumed.—Prudens declines disputing, and wants enjoyment.—Evangelicus directs him to Jesus, and to the scriptures, as giving him encouragement.—Prudens objects their insufficiency, as being a dead letter.—Evangelicus maintains the contrary.—Prudens chides Evangelicus for not referring him to the Spirit's influences.—Evangelicus replies, and convicts him of treating God as a liar.—Prudens self-condemned concludes the discourse, and invites Evangelicus to dine with him on the morrow.—Evangelicus accepts his invitation, and charges him to adhere to the gospel, as his only hope.—Prudens thanks him, and withdraws.

PRUDENS.

WELL, neighbour, I make bold to enter in;
For what are idle compliments, but sin?

A waste

A waste of time ; a pain to men of sense ;
 Foundations of suspicion and offence ?
 I wish them banish'd from the great and small ;
 Downright sincerity is best of all.

EVANGELICUS.

Welcome, kind neighbour ; I can say no more,
 But acquiesce in what you've said before.
 No compliments are necessary here,
 So please to take possession of a chair ;
 And tell me freely what your thoughts have been,
 Since yesterday we parted on the green.

PRUDENS.

O, Evan ! I have thought, and thought again,
 Yet fears and scruples in my heart remain.
 I see the Saviour merciful and good,
 But cannot love and trust him as I would.
 I find a lurking principle within,
 Which chains me down to unbelief and sin.

Sometimes a beam, a glimpse of heavenly day,
 Shines on my soul, and chases clouds away :
 But soon the shadows and the night return ;
 Then wretched and disconsolate I mourn ;
 Uncertain what to think, or what to do :—
 Pray tell me, Evan, if it's so with you.

EVANGELICUS.

Yes, Prudens, it is daily so in part,
 When carnal reason agitates my heart ;

D

But

But I have learnt to make a difference,
 Betwixt a life of faith, and life of sense :
 Or like the fane on yonder lofty tower,
 I should be toss'd about each day and hour.
 But when I look to Jesus crucify'd,
 And think for whom the Lord of glory dy'd,
 A firm persuasion fixes on my soul,
 Which carnal reason never can control.
 Then stedfast as the tower I remain ;
 Winds, waves, and tempests, rage and rear in vain :
 The Rock supports me, and if that endure,
 Though seas surround me, I am still secure.

P R U D E N S.

O, that I could but this distinction know !
 Pray, Evan, try the difference to shew.
 I think 'twould be for my essential good,
 If I this matter better understood.

E V A N G E L I C U S.

It surely is of consequence, my friend ;
 Yet difficult for some to comprehend.
 'Tis matter of experience : in short,
 'Tis better learnt by practice than report.
 Faith rests upon the promises of God ;
 Confirm'd by declarations, oaths, and blood :
 And while they stand to sinners, such as I,
 'Midst all discouragements I thither fly ;
 Determin'd, if I perish—there to die.

Faith

Faith looks to Jesus ; Jesus crucify'd ;
 And glories in him, and in nought beside.
 Faith trusts a righteous God, who cannot lie ;
 Sense feeds on evidences, peace and joy :
 But pines for want, if these are once away ;
 Can give no credit, must have present pay.

Faith buys the salve, and lays it on the sore,
 And waits with patience till it work a cure ; }
 Sense feels a pleasure in its healing power :
 But if the application give it pain,
 Sense soon desires to take it off again.
 Sense would have present ease at any rate,
 And run the risk of her eternal state :
 But faith can trust the word, and wait until
 It please the Lord his promise to fulfil.

Faith plants the tree, and nourishes the root :
 Sense plucks the blossom, and destroys the fruit.
 Faith, like a merchant, fails abroad for wealth :
 Sense stays at home, and often lives by stealth.
 Faith trusts in the Decree and decrees :
 Sense can believe no farther than she sees.
 Faith covenants to be the Lord's alone :
 Sense wants the Lord to make all things her own.
 Faith is content with endless joys to come :
 Sense longs for everlasting joys at home.
 Faith builds alone on what the Lord declares :
 Sense builds her confidence on what she shares.

Thus, Prudens, you discern a difference
 Betwixt a life of faith, and life of sense ;
 And hereby may discover, if you try,
 What spirit you are regulated by.

P R U D E N S.

Indeed, my Evan, as you went along,
 I thought my spirit was both right and wrong.
 But, in believing, don't we hope to find
 Celestial joys, to console the mind ?
 How can I think my faith in Jesus right,
 Unless it bring me profit and delight !

E V A N G E L I C U S.

Causes will have their consequences ; still,
 A counter cause that consequence may kill.

The dial in your garden shews the hour
 When the sun rises in his life and power :
 But if a sable cloud shall come between,
 Neither the shadow nor the sun are seen.
 Now will you throw your dial quite away,
 Because it does not give the time of day ?
 Or question if there be a sun, or no,
 Because you do not see him shine, or glow ?

Christ is the Sun to the believer's soul ;
 Disease, guilt, accident, his beams control ;
 Or bring the spirit into such a maze,
 She cannot feel his heat, or see his rays.

Then

Then such as live by sense begin to mourn,
 Their Lord is gone, and never will return.
 But those who live a life of faith, depend
 On Jesus still, as on an absent friend :
 And hope, and wait, and read, and pray, and hear,
 Till clouds are vanish'd, and the sun appear.
 Whate'er their feelings are, they know the Lord
 Is still the same, and will perform his word.

This is the sinner's privilege, and this
 The only way to have a settled peace.
 Were I to think my state was good or bad,
 Because I'm sometimes sorrowful, or glad ;
 I should be like a vessel in the sea,
 Without ballast, or anchor ; drove away
 With ev'ry sudden gale ; or dash'd on shore ;
 Or sunk in billows, to arise no more.

P R U D E N S.

O ! that I could but evidently see,
 That Jesus was a sacrifice for me !
 Or hear the Spirit, in his powerful call,
 Speak peace and pardon to my guilty soul !
 Or feel an evidence, a proof within,
 That I was dead to vanity and sin !
 Or any testimony clear, and plain,
 To prove that I was truly born again !
 Then I could hear with pleasure what you say,
 And live a life of faith from day to day.

But there's a *something* gives me great distress !
 A certain *something*, which I can't express ; I find
 That keeps me at a distance from the Lord,
 And makes me tremble at his flaming sword.

EVANGELICUS.

Prudens, perhaps, will think his friend to blame,
 If he presume to tell his *something*'s name :
 And yet the case is evident and clear,
 That unbelief's the parent of his fear,
 And while he harbours this within his breast,
 'Tis vain to hope for happiness or rest.
 'Twas this destroy'd the world of old, and still
 'Tis full of vigour to destroy and kill.
 This animates the sinner to rebel ;
 And sooths his fancy till he drops to hell :
 But there it leaves him, swallow'd up in grief,
 To curse the vile impostor—unbelief.

O ! cursed unbelief ! where that prevails,
 The richest cordial of religion fails !
 The gospel may be preach'd from year to year ;
 If 'tis not mix'd with faith in them that hear,
 It only execrates the human race.—
 Heav'n grant that this may never be thy case.

PRUDENS.

Amen, dear Evan, heartily amen !
 O ! what a dreadful state shall I be in,

If

If unbēlief should keep me out of heav'n!
Whither, O whither, must my soul be driven!

And yet, so stupid, so perverse am I,
I can't believe, dear Evan, if I die.
Now in this sad dilemma, please to shew
A hell-deserving sinner what to do.

EVANGELICUS.

If Prudens can't believe, then let him try
To count the gospel nothing but a lie.
'Tis either true, or false; or wrong, or right:
Either believe it, or reject it quite.

PRUDENS.

The gospel? I believe it ev'ry line!
But then, my faith is human, not divine.
The threatenings in full display appear;
Like Lucifer, I tremble and despair.
A faith traditional I think I find.
True faith, you know, is of another kind.

EVANGELICUS.

Your nice distinction, human and divine
As here apply'd, seems fanciful and fine.

D 4

Look

* The various distinctions which some give of faith, seem calculated to obscure the truth, and to confuse the mind, rather than to lead the sinner to a regular and firm dependance on Christ. There may be a propriety in describing faith as human and divine, as the one is giving credit to human, the other

Look in your Bible, search from end to end,
 And mark the passage where you find it penn'd.
 Or tell me, Prudens, what you mean thereby,
 That I with understanding may reply.
 For if I shoot an arrow in the dark,
 'Tis quite unlikely I should hit the mark.

The truth's divine on which the soul relies :
 And fruits divine from such a faith will rise.
 But as to faith itself, the thing's the same ;
 Whether from heaven, or from earth it came.

Though

other to divine testimony : yet, admitting a difference with respect to the authors, and objects of faith, there seems to be none in the nature of faith itself, except in degree, and influence. It is from human testimony that we believe there is such a place as Japan. It is from divine testimony that we believe there is such a place as Heaven. Yet the assent of the mind is the same, whether it respect the one or the other. But as Heaven is much more to us than Japan, so we ought to be much more solicitous to find the way to it, and to have a title to its enjoyments.— The doctrines of religion are divine in their nature, and testified by God himself ; then the conviction of their truth and importance is divine faith, whatever might be the immediate or apparent cause of that conviction. A person, for instance, whose faith in Jesus comes by hearing, believes in virtue of seeing, or feeling the evidence of divine truth, and places his dependance on the Lord Jesus Christ, and not on the ability or testimony of the preacher. So that his faith does not stand in the wisdom of men, but in the power of God ; though a man might be the instrument, or the immediate cause of his believing.

Though objects differ very much in kind,
Faith is the same as it respects the mind.

P R U D E N S.

A faith divine, as I have understood,
Respects the author—not the object—God.
If he upon a sinner deign to shine,
The faith which he infuses is divine :
But that, which we by human means attain,
We call it human, as it comes from men.

E V A N G E L I C U S.

Suppose I tell you Jesus dy'd for you ;
Convince you by the Bible this is true :
This you'd call *human* faith, because it came
From one inhabiting a human frame.
But if an Angel, or Divinity,
Covince you of the same ; then faith would be
In your account *divine*, I understand ;
Because you had it from a better hand.
Yet if you were convinc'd by him or me,
Your faith could only differ in degree.
Conviction is the same, and must be so,
Whether it came from heaven or below.

If from the Bible you discover truth,
Why not as well as from an Angel's mouth ?
The truth's the matter we should aim to find.
The truth must set us free, and rule the mind.

Suppose

Suppose an Angel were to speak to you ;
 You only could believe he told you true.
 Perhaps your resolution would be shook,
 More by a shining Angel, than a book :
 But that might rather weaken, than support ;
 Drive you from happiness, instead of court.
 If Moses and the Prophets will not do,
 An Angel's voice would be in vain to you.

On this, my Prudens, you may safely rest ;
 Those methods God appoints must be the best.

P R U D E N S.

I feel some weight in what you offer now :
 Conviction, is conviction, I allow :
 Yet, in degree, the difference is great,
 Beyond what I can accurately state.
 So great indeed the difference would be,
 That it would seem another faith to me.
 But now I wish to know, what you conceive
 To be the scripture meaning of *believe* ?

E V A N G E L I C U S.

A firm persuasion of the truth of God ;
 Not only as reveal'd, but understood :
 And then, with cordiality of mind,
 Embracing of it with a will resign'd *.

P R U.

* Many believe the scriptures to be the truth of God, but understand very little of what they contain ; consequently their faith in them is very partial and imperfect. But when they are understood, and the doctrines thereof cordially embraced ; this constitutes true faith therein. Heb. xi. 13.

PRUDENS.

And is this all?—dear Evan, if you try,
Where faith resides, the heart is full of joy.

EVANGELICUS.

Sometimes it is ; but that's another thing ;
Quite as distinct as water and a spring.
A tree produces berries ; but you know,
Berries are not the tree on which they grow.
So peace, and joy, and love, from faith proceed,
Like fruit from trees ; but not the trees indeed.

PRUDENS.

If you are right, my Evan, I am wrong ;
And have been quite mistaken all along.

EVANGELICUS.

'Tis possible I may the meaning miss :
Pray tell me, Prudens, what you think it is ?

PRUDENS.

Faith is a plant, a flower of Paradise, *
Created by the Lord Jehovah's voice :

Ingrafted

* If any should think this description of faith a child of the author's imagination, held up to expose to ridicule other people ; they are quite mistaken. He has reason to believe it is consistent with the views of many : however, it is as near as possible a simple versification of what a very popular preacher, of the present day, delivered in his hearing, to a very crowded auditory, not long ago.

Ingrafted in the Soul by grace divine ;
And makes the mortal like an Angel shine.

EVANGELICUS.

Most excellent ! quite wonderful indeed !
Mine in comparison is but a weed.

PRUDENS.

A carnal man can nothing of it know ;
A hand divine alone can make it grow.
And where the Deity has fixt its root,
It buds, and blossoms, and produces fruit.
The Sun of righteousness, in all his power,
Shines on its branches ev'ry day and hour.
The dews of grace on all its leaves distil,
And ev'ry fold, and ev'ry fibre fill.
The man who has it, knows his sins forgiven,
As certainly as those who are in heaven.
O ! if I could but such a faith obtain,
I'd look on earthly pleasures with disdain !

EVANGELICUS.

I wonder not to see you gape and stare,
If you expect a thing so great and rare.
But tell me, Prudens, if you ever knew,
A soul in which this fine exotic grew :
Or whether from the Bible you receive
Your explication of the word *believe* ?

PRU.

P R U D E N S.

To tell you, Evan, if I must be free,
 You're quite too low, too groveling for me.
 I've had enough of earth, and earthly things;
 I want to soar away on eagles wings,
 To sit and banquet with the King of kings. }

E V A N G E L I C U S.

Perhaps you do ; but then I hope you'll stay
 To vindicate the truth of what you say :
 Or I may think, this fine celestial plant,
 Only exists in rhapsody and rant.

P R U D E N S.

That faith's the gift of God is very plain :
 This all our orthodox divines maintain.
 And if you call't a plant, a hand, or tree,
 'Tis matter of no consequence to me :
 The thing is what I want, and God alone
 Can make this precious privilege my own.

E V A N G E L I C U S.

That faith's the gift of God, I don't deny :
 But who this gift, this benefit enjoy ?
 When all is said, which can be said about it,
 'Tis evident that many are without it.
 Now what's the reason of their being so ?
 Is it because God wont the gift bestow ?

Or

Or is it not their negligence and pride,
Which make them cast the truth of God aside?

P R U D E N S.

God's will is sov'reign, and his grace is free :
He's not accountable to such as we.
He has a right to give, or to withhold.
Your question seems too curious and bold.
Yet were I to reply, I should conceive
That all, to whom he gives his grace, believe.
As to the rest, I don't know what to say ;
Though he's not call'd them yet—perhaps he may.

E V A N G E L I C U S.

Great are the gifts, which God bestows on men ;
Which we by means, and means alone, obtain.

Your infant son, some seasons back, you know,
Was quite incapable to speak or go :
But now with pleasure you behold him walk,
And wonder at his faculty to talk.

Now these are gifts, and noble gifts from heaven ;
Yet were not in an instant to him given :
Means were attended to by him and you,
By which your son to this perfection grew.
And if those means had all been let alone,
These gifts had both been lost, and lost your son.

So faith, my Prudens, is this gift of God ;
And just as freely is the gift bestow'd.
Now, if you would this blessed gift possess,
Attend with diligence the means of grace.

P R U D E N S.

What means would you prescribe to one quite blind,
The ways of God—eternal life to find ?

E V A N G E L I C U S.

With all my power, I'd urge the man to use
Those very means, Christ did the blinded Jews :
Nor entertain a doubt but these would do,
If by the sinner well attended to.

Faith is a gift, as many others are ;
It comes by hearing, meditation, prayer. *
Sometimes by one of these, sometimes another ;
Sometimes in union of them all together.
'Tis not like reason, sense, and appetite,
Which come unsought for, like the day and night.
Yet still as truly 'tis a gift from heaven,
As last year's harvest to the nation given.

P R U -

* Several objections may be opposed to this, and I should not attempt to defend it, were it given as a first direction, or unconnected with other means ; especially to an ignorant unconcerned soul, who had neither knowledge of God, nor desire after it : yet, in conjunction with hearing and meditation, it seems a very natural, scriptural, and effectual mean ; particularly for the increase and strengthening of faith. Hereby the soul is released from the world, and draws near to God ; unites with him, and resigns itself to him. Yea, it exercises the very grace for which it prays : which has a remarkable tendency to evidence its reality, and to remove those discouraging fears, which generally hang about the minds of young professors. Perhaps there are few christians who have not found this true in their own experience.

P R U D E N S.

A Paul may plant, Apollos he may water;
 But I'll look up alone to my Creator.
 What will their planting and their wat'ring do,
 Unless Jehovah add his blessing too !
 'Tis he must give the increase to the tree,
 Or all their labour is but vanity.

E V A N G E L I C U S.

I wonder, Prudens, you should reason so ;
 When did the tree which was not planted grow ?
 Did ever mortal in creation, yet,
 Find increase on a tree which ne'er was set ?
 Is planting nothing, and is watering vain ?
 Who reaps a field that never sows the grain ?
 And though the increase from the Lord proceeds,
 A field uncultivated brings forth weeds.

Such doctrine, Prudens, if attended to,
 Might make the farmer neither plough nor sow.
 Then what a joyful harvest should we see !
 What increase, Prudens, do you think there'd be ?

P R U D E N S.

I don't know how, dear Evan, to reply ;
 But I've no ladder that will reach the sky ;
 And so to climb there 'tis in vain to try. }
 }

EVANGELICUS.

The sky, dear Prudens? What would'st thou do
there!

The word is nigh thee, founded in thy ear : }
That is the word of faith which we declare : }
The word of God, which heaven has often blest,
In giving comfort to the troubled break.
Why, my dear Prudens, may not you receive
The consolation which the scriptures give?

PRUDENS.

Is faith acquir'd like a mechanic art ? }
Grace, my dear Evan, must the gift impart ; }
For nothing else can ever change the heart.
If I attend to means, yet means alone
Will never make this privilege my own.
If this is all you can prescribe, give o'er :
Means will not do for me, I must have more.

EVANGELICUS.

Be patient, Prudens, let not nature reign ;
Nor treat God's kind directions with disdain.
Whatever he appoints is kind and wise,
Though fools the wisdom of their God despise.
Do thou with diligence the means attend,
And they shall prove sufficient for the end.
If more is wanting, he will more bestow :
All that belongs to him, he'll freely do.
Let God pronounce the word, appoint the way ;
Let mortals hear him, and his voice obey.

Whether an angel, or an aſſ he ſend ;
 The message, more than messenger, attend.
 By feeble means, he very often brings
 To high perfection moſt prodigious things.
 Yet, trifling as they ſeem to human pride,
 My Prudens, did they ever fail when try'd ?

Is Israel cloſe purſu'd by Pharaoh's hoſt,
 Down to the very borders of his coaſt ?
 What muſt they do to paſs the ſwelling flood ?
 Moſes muſt part the waters with his rod.
 The waters part, and make no more to do,
 While Moſes with the people travel through.

Behold them now, by God's direcſion, brought
 Into the wilderness, and parch'd with drought.
 What muſt they do to ſome water to obtain ?
 The rock is ſmote—and waters fill the plain.

Do ſerpents bite the people as they paſs ?
 Moſes muſt make a ſerpent then of brafs ;
 That all the people wiſhing to be whole,
 May ſee the brazen ſerpent, and the poll.
 The cure is certain, if they do but look ;
 Though not one grain of medicine he took.

If Jericho be fenced round with ſtone,
 How can this famous city be o'erthrown ?
 Let rams horns ſound before this fenced town ;
 The walls of Jericho ſhall tumble down.

When naſtions join, and Israel invade,
 With numbers infinite, in arms array'd ;

See

See Gideon with his pitcher, and his lamp;
Rout this vast army, and destroy their camp.

Does leprous Naaman want a cure from God?
Go, said the prophet, wash in Jordan's flood.
The method seem'd too mean, and touch'd his pride;
But it was quite effectual when try'd.

Do guilty creatures want salvation now?
Then let them search the scriptures, this will do:
'Tis Christ's appointment, carry this in mind,
And then continue searching till you find.

P R U D E N S.

I thank you, Evan, for your kind rebuke:
Passion may be for piety mistook.
If you should find me do the like again,
I beg you'll tell me, though it give you pain.
I stand the more condemn'd, since I behold
More of the ways of God with men of old.
But now remember, all our pains and strife
Are after faith, and not eternal life.
Blessed be God, I see the Saviour's grace,
Free and sufficient for the human race.
But as it is by faith we this receive;
The question is, how sinners may believe?

E V A N G E L I C U S.

Prudens, it gives me pleasure great indeed,
To hear this frank acknowledgment proceed
So freely from your mouth—that there is grace
Free and sufficient for the human race.

If this acknowledgment of yours be true,
 You must believe that there is grace for you.
 Now this is faith in essence and degree ;
 Only not ripen'd to maturity.
 Still persevere, and search a little longer,
 And you shall find your faith in Jesus stronger.

I thank you kindly for your observation ;
 And crave your pardon for the aberration.
 The words appear to have a difference,
 Yet differ more methinks in sound than sense.
 They surely each on other do depend ;
 Faith is the *way*, eternal life the *end*.
 To make this matter evident and plain,
 We must define believing o'er again.
 And this throughout the book of God, you'll find
 Includes two things, as it respects the mind.

First, a conviction that the gospel's true,
 Free, adequate, for sinners such as you.

Now this conviction only can arise
 From evidence, which strikes your mental eyes.
 You hear accounts quite wonderful and new ;
 Which, if they're probable, you think them true.
 But sometimes so romantic they appear,
 You can't believe them, though the author swear.
 For want of evidence, you stand in doubt :
 'Tis weak, 'tis foolish to believe without.
 And as the evidence seems strong, or weak,
 So is conviction of the thing they speak.

Now

Now to apply this to the truths of God.
 You hear of pardon through a Saviour's blood.
 This truth appears to carnal men so strange,
 They cannot make it with their reason range.
 It seems improbable, at least to them ;
 So disbelieve it, and their God condemn.
 They treat his testimony as a lie ;
 Reject his counsel, and his truth deny.

P R U D E N S.

Evan, you cut me to the very heart !
 In this rejection, I have had my part !
 Till late the thunder rattled in mine ear,
 I could contemn this doctrine with a sneer.
 Thanks be to God ! adored be his grace !
 That now I tremble at a thought so base.—

Pardon this interruption, and proceed.

E V A N G E L I C U S.

Yet some there are act different indeed ;
 They'll not reject it on a single view,
 But look for evidence to prove it true,
 And soon one cogent argument they spy—
 The author cannot be deceiv'd—nor lie.
 Many corroborating proofs they find,
 Which bring complete conviction to the mind.

Now this appears to be the case with you ;
 You see the gospel, and believe it true.

But there's a second necessary thing,
 Which Prudens will permit his friend to bring;
 And that's the cordial answer of your soul,
 Or coming to the Saviour at his call.
 An acquiescence of your very heart,
 With all your old dependances to part,
 To take the Saviour, cross and crown together,
 To follow him, whatever be the weather,
 This is believing on him of a truth;
 And follow'd by confession with your mouth.
 'Tis coming, eating, drinking, and obeying;
 Your whole dependance on the Saviour laying;
 A faith like this will prove its nature true,
 Because it ever has its fruits to shew,
 It works by love, and purifies the heart;
 It makes the christian for his follies smart;
 It lays the soul in dust before the throne,
 And makes it magnify the Lord alone,
 And while it mortifies the man for sin,
 A sense of pardon gives him peace within.

This part is sometimes taken for the whole;
 The rest is but the *body*, this the *soul*.
 This is the part which brings the blessing home;
 And even antidates the joys to come.
 Without it, all your knowledge of the way
 Will but condemn you while you run astray.

Now if a simple answer I must give
 To what you ask—how sinners may believe:

Let

Let them apply their mind with earnest care
 To what the scriptures of the truth declare :
 And as they there behold the Saviour's grace,
 With simple hearts the benefits embrace.

P R U D E N S.

I thank you, Evan, for the pains you take,
 And many observations which you make :
 Yet if to others, I objections find,
 I hope you'll not esteem your friend unkind.
 You lay such mighty stress upon the letter,
 As though we want no other help, nor better.
 Now such a faith as we obtain from thence,
 Appears to me of little consequence.
 The whole materials which compose the book,
 Are only ink and paper, if you look.

E V A N G E L I C U S.

Prudens, you quite mistake the matter here ;
 The truth's divine, whate'er the writings are.
 When to the Bible you direct your eyes ;
 'Tis not the paper, nor the ink, you prize.
 But 'tis the truth of God you there discern ;
 And heavenly knowledge by the scriptures learn.
 The book is but an instrument to you,
 The glass by which you heavenly wonders view.
 Yet lay the blessed Bible quite aside,
 And tell me how you'll know the Saviour dy'd.

There's nothing then in all the world, to shew
What the lost sinner to be say'd must do.

P R U D E N S.

Your observation, Evan, does me good ;
I speake of what I little understood.
I stand corrected in this single view ;
Yet find some hesitation in me too.—
God can impart, if he is so inclin'd,
His truth without a Bible to the mind.
It seems to me a quicker, safer way,
To teach his creatures by a heavenly ray ;
Than by a volume put into my hand,
Which tells a hundred things I cannot understand.

E V A N G E L I C U S.

Prudens was shock'd a little while ago,
When ask'd the cause of unbelief to shew :
But now his diffidence is banish'd quite,
And he dare tell Jehovah what is right.

But, waving this imprudence of my friend ;
I own Jehovah can his grace extend
Without a Bible to the human heart,
And sacred truth without a book impart.
But he's a Master ; and if he display
His grace to rebels, let him choose the way.
Shall they presume to tell him *what* they want ;
And teach him *how* the favour he must grant ?

Let

Let it suffice that he will mercy show.

Let them be thankful that he'll grace bestow.

P R U D E N S.

Dear Evan, you so hard upon me press,
I can do nought but trespass, and confess.
I see my error ; shall I say, repent ?
Yet 'twas an error Prudens never meant.
I freely own that God's a right to choose
Vengeance, or mercy ; and what means to use.
His *common* grace for *common* crimes may do ;
But mine are neither *common* crimes nor few.
Your observations may be very good ;
But nought will serve me but the voice of God.

E V A N G E L I C U S.

When from the cloud the dreadful thunder broke,
Who was it but the Deity that spoke ?
His providences through the varied year
Have all a voice, which all the world may hear.
But only from the Bible, can you find,
A voice of God to console your mind.

P R U D E N S.

Evan forgets the man at Philippi,
Or rather seems dispos'd to pass him by.
I want an earthquake, or a light divine,
To force conviction in this soul of mine.

E V A N.

EVANGELICUS.

What did the earthquake for the jailer do,
 More than the recent thunder did for you ?
 Though it convicted him of sin and danger,
 To faith in Jesus he was still a stranger.
 To have salvation, he must hear the word,
 Which testify'd of Jesus Christ the Lord.
 God did not come to make his glory known ;
 But sent the blessed tidings of his Son.
 He this believ'd, and felt his terrors cease ;
 And now enjoys serenity and peace.

This, is the very way I recommend
 To ev'ry sinner ; and to you, my friend.
 The word's a lamp, and if you will but try't,
 You'll find the entrance of it give you light.

Were God to answer Prudens' strange request,
 How would his anxious bosom be distress'd !
 You want you knew not what :—it seems to me,
 You stand in need of more humility.
 Strive, my dear Prudens, to inherit that,
 And not to clamour for you don't know what.

PRUDENS.

To what a dreadful prodigy I'm grown !
 Surely my heart is harder than a stone !
 That what appears to you so full and plain,
 Should still a mystery to me remain.
 And yet to flatter, or to use deceit,
 Would be a crime which I detest and hate.

The

The want of more humility I feel,
 I want a heav'ly bias on my will.
 Tho' I'm convinc'd there's grace, and grace for me,
 I'm not converted as I ought to be.
 I see the nature of redeeming love,
 But want his gracious drawings from above.
 What signifies the gospel understood,
 'Tis gospel felt which is to do me good.
 O ! that I could but find my soul releas'd,
 From a vile tyrant, lurking in my breast !

EVANGELICUS.

My Prudens wants, I evidently see,
 To eat the fruit, before he plants the tree.
 He wants the sense of pardon to receive,
 Before he's resolution to believe.
 But as the things of nature, have their place ;
 So, my dear Prudens, have the things of grace.
 First come to Jesus, guilty as you are ;
 Cast on his mercy all your load of care :
 Then will you find your enemies depart ;
 And gentle peace sit smiling in your heart.

PRUDENS.

Me come to Jesus ? Me you little know !
 Till Jesus come to me, I cannot go.
 What though I see, by God's unerring word,
 Complete redemption through a dying Lord ;

"Tis

'Tis all as nothing!—brings no peace to me!
I somehow can't believe the thing I see.

EVANGELICUS.

I feel a mixture now of joy and grief.
Knowledge, undoubtedly, includes belief.
You see the Saviour dy'd, and dy'd for you.
Can you believe this, and dispute it too?
'Tis an absurdity to argue so.—
You want conviction of a truth you know.
If you believe the gospel with your heart;
To you the Deity has done his part.
The knowledge which you have is from above,
Communicated by the God of love.
And whether from the word of truth it came,
Or by a miracle, the thing's the same.
'Tis knowledge human wisdom cannot reach;
'Tis truth divine which God alone can teach:
And if you have it, God hath taught it you:
Depend upon it, and your faith is true.

If you could lay your former notions by,
And search the scriptures with a single eye;
With the same evidence you saw his love,
You'd feel your unbelief, and fears remove.
That blessed book, which shews the Saviour's grace,
Bears its credentials on its very face:
And while it shews the Saviour's grace to you,
You see its evidence, and feel it too.—

Now,

Now, if you please, we'll take a moment's rest :
A little meditation may be best.

P R U D E N S.

With all my heart ; for I begin to find,
A want of relaxation to my mind.

P A U S E.

E V A N G E L I C U S.

Well, Prudens, how are matters with you now ?

P R U D E N S.

Indeed, my Evan, I can scarce tell how.
I am not as I would be, I confess :
I feel anxiety ; I feel distress.
I want not to dispute, but to enjoy :
I want a faith my soul to justify.
I know without it I am quite undone ;
My ev'ry hope and subterfuge is gone :
Eternal ruin stares me in the face ;
Nothing can save me but an act of grace.

E V A N G E L I C U S.

Dear Prudens, all thy wants may be supply'd :
To save thy soul, the Prince of Glory dy'd.
Look unto Jesus, thy Redeemer see,
In all his meekness, crucify'd for thee !

Never

Never was grace so wonderful display'd,
 Since the foundation of the world was laid.
 To save the righteous, Jesus never came ;
 The sinner *only* has a proper claim.
 Then as a sinner come to Jesus, come ;
 The word of truth assures, there still is room.

P R U D E N S.

I know these calls are in the word of truth ;
 But I must have them from the Saviour's mouth,
 Before I dare conclude the blessings mine ;
 " Pearls ought not to be cast to dogs and swine :"
 And sure the creature is not to be found,
 More hard, more brutish, on Jehovah's ground !

E V A N G E L I C U S.

It grieves me, Prudens, grieves me to the heart ;
 I sympathize with you in all your smart :
 Yet very sure I am you judge amiss,
 And thereby rob yourself of present peace.

Wherein does all thy doggishness appear ?
 When didst thou turn again to rend and tear ?
 When didst thou tread the gospel under feet,
 As hogs would pearls, like pebbles in the street ? —

And must the Saviour come again from heaven ?
 With his own mouth pronounce thy sins forgiven,
 Before you dare accept the offer'd grace ?
 Then never dream of either joy or peace :

If

If he must come again at thy desire,
Expect to see him in a flame of fire!

P R U D E N S.

I don't expect him bodily again ;
That were a thought ridiculous and vain :
But in his grace and Spirit, to control
This evil disposition in my soul.
The word of scripture is a letter dead ;
And thousands read it as the Eunuch read.
And till the Holy Ghost shall make it plain,
Sinners shall read it o'er, and o'er, in vain.

E V A N G E L I C U S.

You shock me, Prudens, as you go along,
To hear your arguments, so right, so wrong.
What Philip taught the Eunuch is at hand ;
And is there aught you do not understand ?
He wants instruction, cannot be deny'd,
But thinks a man sufficient for his guide.
A man appear'd with sacred knowledge fraught ;
Gave him the blest intelligence he sought.
He saw the testimony clear and true ;
Believ'd the record—you may do so too.
He wants no Deity to leave the skies ;
But views the Saviour, and on him relies.

Who told thee, that the word of God was dead ?
Why tremble then at what is threatened ?

If

If all the promises have lost their force,
 The threatenings must then be dead of course.
 Who gave this holy book the mortal wound,
 And left the Bible bleeding on the ground ?
 The man, the monster must be very clever,
 To kill the word of God, which lives for ever*.

And is God's will reveal'd, and not reveal'd ?
 And is the Bible but a fountain seal'd ?
 Or an old act of Parliament repeal'd ? }
 A last year's Almanack, grown out of date ;
 No longer fit mankind to regulate :
 So without ceremony laid aside,
 As insufficient for the sinner's guide ?
 Astonishing ! Can Prudens think it true ?
 I know he falls disgusted at the view !

PRUDENS.

I stand ashamed, dear Evan, and confus'd :
 Undoubtedly the scriptures are abus'd.
 Yet, should I say the Bible was alive,
 With such a mortal you'd no longer strive :
 You'd think me troubled with a crazy head :—
 And sure it either is alive or dead !

EVANGELICUS.

Alive, or dead, applied to a word,
 Seem equally improper, and absurd :

But

But us'd as metaphors, these terms set forth
Its inutility, or matchless worth.

Thus understood, the precepts of the Lord
Are quick and pow'rful, sharper than a sword.
It ever lives as uncorrupted seed
Sown in the heart, to generate and breed.
Where, if it can but find a soil to suit,
It fails not to produce abundant fruit.
It cultivates the ground on which it grows,
And makes the desert blossom as the rose.
Converts the soul through energy divine,
And executes Jehovah's great design.
But if rejected when 'tis heard, or read,
It leaves the sinner barren, cold, and dead.
Yet still retains its vigour to condemn,
Whom it can neither comfort, nor reclaim.

The word's a hammer, rocks to break in two :
A sword to pierce the harden'd sinner through :
A sov'reign med'cine, that will heal the wound,
When other things are insufficient found.
Ability within the Bible lies,
To make the sinner to salvation wise.
The hungry soul may find provision here,
When all things else as vanity appear.

O ! read the sacred page, dear Prudens read !
Revere it as the will of God indeed !
Depend upon it as a world of truth,
This moment issuing from Jesu's mouth :

F

And

And thou wilt find it console thy soul,
And drive thy fears and troubles to the pole.

P R U D E N S.

The word of God I venerate as true :
And in the general believe with you :
But there's a matter, if I judge aright,
You either quite forget, or seem to slight :
And that's the office of the Holy Ghost ;
The Christian's glory and eternal boast.
It matters not what knowledge we attain ;
If he be absent, all the rest is vain.
He must convert by his almighty power,
Or I be ruined for evermore.

Admit the metaphor, *a flaming sword*,
A fit elucidation of the word.
Who trembles at a sword without an arm ?
'Tis quite incapable of good or harm.

England invaded both by Spain and France,
Hundreds of thousands in their ranks advance,
Behold their grand artillery appear ;
With loads of ammunition in the rear.
The King, advised by a noble Lord,
Sends forth a herald with a flaming sword.
'Tis done, according to his wise command,
To drive invaders from the British land.
Could we expect this sword to scare away
An army, thus in terrible array ?

Without

Without an arm to execute the blow,
The sword would make diversion for the foe.

Thus, Evan, when my enemies appear ;
I see the word presented as a spear.
But they with insolence the sword defy,
And force me from the garrison to fly.
Trembling I run before the horrid crew !
In such a case what would my Evan do ?
I want a God to undertake my cause !
I want a God to thunder on my foes !
I want an arm divine to hold me up,
Or down to ruin I must quickly drop !

EVANGELICUS.

Pray tell me, Prudens, where this army lies,
That fills you with such terrible surprize :
And what it's done to give you such alarms,
To make you quit your garrison and arms.
Your gaping wounds, your scars of honour shew,
Which you receiv'd from this insulting foe :
Or I shall scarce have any thing to say,
To vindicate the man who runs away.

This army with so many terrors clad :
This army, at the sight of which you fled :
This army, formidable at a distance,
Will vanish if you make a stout resistance.
Their cause is bad, their captain but a coward;
In close engagement quickly overpower'd.

The weakest Christian, if he's arm'd aright,
Will put a thousand of his foes to flight.
Resist the Devil—and he's out of view—
Draw nigh to God, and he'll draw nigh to you.

Try, my dear Prudens, try to muster up
A little courage, and a little hope :
And take the Spirit's sword into your hand,
Resolved in your own defence to stand.
No more to yield, or like a coward fly ;
To fight and conquer ; or to fight and die.
You'd surely find, was this to be the case,
Your enemies would fly before your face.
In future try ; besure to keep the field ;
And if you cannot conquer, scorn to yield.
You can but die ; to die in such a cause,
Would gain you reputation, and applause :
A crown of life to decorate your head :
Immortal honours, when your foes are dead.

As to the doctrine of the Holy Ghost ;
It seems to me an ocean without coast :
A mighty deep, in which I always fail,
Whenever I attempt to sound, or fail.
Yet far, dear Prudens, far be it from me,
To doubt his power, or slight his energy.
But this appears quite evident and plain,
He works by means the blessed end to gain.

Behold the nations without revelation :
What do they know of Jesus and salvation ?

Bury'd

Bury'd in ignorance, and slaves to lust ;
 And for the want of saving knowledge, lost.
 You will not find a soul, from north to south,
 That merely by the Spirit knows the truth.
 And are we wiser ?—then the cause is plain ;
 'Tis from the Bible we this wisdom gain.

Suppose we bring this matter nearer home,
 And to the Spirit's warm defenders come.
 What have they learnt themselves, or taught us more,
 Of God, of Jesus, than was known before ?
 They only tell us what the scriptures tell :
 The best that we can say, they've done it well.
 But if they go beyond, or step aside ;
 We dare not think the Holy Ghost their guide :
 Their doctrine by the scripture must be try'd. }

Not that I think the Holy Ghost confin'd
 To operate alike on all mankind.
 Some he subdues with terrors of the law ;
 And fills their souls with reverence, and awe.
 Some he allures with promises and grace ;
 And fills their hearts with gratitude and peace.
 Some he alarms by thunder and by fire ;
 Compels them after mercy to enquire.
 Some in a little time recover sight ;
 And some by slow degrees enjoy the light.
 And some obey the gracious Saviour's call,
 Who know not that he operates at all. *

But all are taught of him who Jesus know:
And all who learn of him, to Jesus go.

P R U D E N S.

This is the thing which consolates my mind;
I know the Holy Ghost is not confin'd.
I know he can extend his grace to me,
And set my soul from condemnation free.
But much I am surpriz'd, and well I may,
You ne'er directed me to wait, and pray.

E V A N G E L I C U S.

Because I've no authority, my friend,
Such services as these to recommend.

My Master bids me as his servant go
To preach the gospel to the high and low;
But not to bid them hesitate, and pray
For fresh assistances another day.
However necessary this condition;
Tis not inserted in my Lord's commission.

But as you draw your consolation now,
From what the Spirit may hereafter do;
You'll pardon me if I a caution give,
Lest Satan you unwarily deceive.
I beg, dear Prudens, you'll consider this,
If God is not confin'd, the creature is;
And woe be to the sinner that neglects
The means to which he graciously directs.

P R U D E N S.

But must not God convince the soul of sin,
And draw the sinner, ere he enter in ?
I must be born of more than flesh and blood,
Before I understand the things of God.

E V A N G E L I C U S.

Remember, Prudens, what was said before :
He works by means—the means are in your pow'r.
The other day by accident you fell ;
Your head was bruise'd—the surgeon made it well.
Now was it by a miracle he cur'd
The agonizing pain which you endur'd ?
Or by a preparation spread around,
Which you apply'd to heal the painful wound ?
You cannot think the surgeon's skill alone,
Without the healing plaster, would have done.
And now if you should break your head again,
You'd seek a plaster to relieve your pain.

So Prudens in forbidden paths has trod :

A serpent bit him, poison'd all his blood : }
And none can heal the dreadful wound but God. }
But he being well acquainted with the case,
Prepar'd a plaster proper for the place :
And recommends it as a certain cure,
To ev'ry person, whether rich or poor.
He gives directions for the application,
To all the wounded in the whole creation.

Those that in time the remedy apply,
Will all be cur'd, and all the rest will die,

P R U D E N S.

In one point, Evan, you mistake the case ;
The surgeon laid the plaster on the place.
Now this is what I want, his hand alone
Can make the preparation, lay it on.

E V A N G E L I C U S.

Then let the remedy alone, and see,
If God will lay it, ever lay't on thee.

Whatever kind assistance he shall give ;
The sinner must repent, if he would live.
But not repentance is his work alone ;
Believing is essential to be done.
Or lo ! the wrath of God upon him lies ;
Condemn'd already in his Maker's eyes.
Then wait no longer for a pow'r unknown,
But search the Scriptures ; trust to them alone.

P R U D E N S.

I've read the Scriptures o'er and o'er again ;
And still as dark as ever I remain.
I'll wait at mercy's door ; perhaps the Lord
May sometime please to reach me with his word :
Or give his Spirit to renew my heart ;
To ease my burden'd soul, or heal my smart.

E V A N -

EVANGELICUS.

Perhaps he may ; but dost thou know he will ?
 Perhaps he mayn't ; and then you drop to hell.
 A peradventure, in a cafe like this,
 Is dreadful, if the peradventure miss.
 I tremble, Prudens, at your awful state ;
 Lest you shoudl harden, while you think you wait.

PRUDENS.

What can I do that's better than sit still ?
 I can't believe, dear Evan, when I will.
 If faith was at my option, in my power,
 I would not hesitate another hour.
 You may be sure I would be happy now,
 If it were possible, if I knew how.
 'Tis quite absurd for you to press me so,
 To do what is not possible to do.
 I'm willing, Evan, to do all I can :
 But then consider—I am but a man.

EVANGELICUS.

God knows what it is possible to do,
 Better, perhaps, than either I or you :
 And he commands the sinner to repent,
 And to believe the message he hath sent.
 And do we ever hear the people cry,
 They could not do it if they were to die ?

PRU.

P R U D E N S.

It is not told us what the people said ;
 There were but few the messengers obey'd.
 But then consider what the preachers taught,
 Was prov'd by miracles and wonders wrought :
 To force conviction in the multitude.
 Such proof as this could never be withstood.

E V A N G E L I C U S.

Prudens believes that miracles were wrought,
 In confirmation of the truth they taught ;
 And now those miracles on record stand,
 The same important doctrine to defend.
 Then surely, Prudens, you're compell'd to grant,
 You now have all the evidence you want.

P R U D E N S.

No, Evan, no ! I want before my eyes,
 The Devil dispossess'd, the dead to rise.
 I would with each abomination part.
 I want to love the Lord with all my heart.
 I want complete deliverance from sin.
 I want a heay'n, a perfect heav'n within.
 I want to breathe in a superior clime ;
 To live above the vanities of time.
 I want to see, (as I myself am seen)
 My Saviour's face, without a cloud between.
 I want the God of glory to come down,
 To give me right to an immortal crown.

Then

Then doubts and fears would vanish from my soul ;
And lovely JESUS be my ALL in ALL.

EVANGELICUS.

Britannia's King beats up for volunteers,
A sturdy rogue in consequence appears :
Dispos'd to list, if nothing interpose :
But first he stipulates for food and cloaths :
For spending money, perquisites and fees ;
For high preferments, idleness and ease :
For leave to run away when foes advance ;
And that no charge, or discipline commence :
And lest a bare agreement should not last,
He'll have an article, to hold them fast,
Sign'd by the King's own hand—
Which if agreed to, he is almost willing
To sign the bargain, and receive the shilling.

The officer a moment hears him prate ;
Then crowns the rascal—with a broken pate.

Is Christ a King ? and has he sent abroad
His officers, to raise a troop for God ?
And dare his subjects their objections bring,
And stand to stipulate with such a King ?
Why don't the thunder rattle o'er his head !
Why don't the lightnings blast the rebel dead ?
Why don't the angels leave the worlds of light,
To spurn him down to everlasting night !

PRUDENS.

Astonishing ! my Evan, what's amiss ?
 Sure I have not provok'd a speech like this :
 What have I done to raise your spirit so ;
 To shoot the keenest arrows from your bow ?

EVANGELICUS.

Prudens, it sets my spirit all on fire,
 To hear you treat your Maker as a liar.
 The Lord declares what love he has to you ;
 And proves by miracles that this is true :
 And yet you treat him as a man would treat
 A common profligate, a very cheat.
 Yea, while he with a royal pardon stands,
 You will not take it at his gracious hands,
 But dare to urge exorbitant demands.
 As though he were a servant, or a slave,
 Bound to perform whatever you shall crave.

PRUDENS.

If I have err'd, it was not what I meant.
 My soul is agitated, tost'd and rent.
 I would not wish to dictate to the Lord ;
 Doubt his veracity, provoke his sword.
 Mercy, dear Evan, that I want alone ;
 For without mercy I must be undone :
 Could I be sure his mercy reach'd to me ;
 Like a new creature, happy I should be.

EVAN.

EVANGELICUS.

This proves, my Prudens, tho' it's unawares,
 You can't believe what God Jehovah fwears.
 Now if you dare not take him at his word ;
 You dare to treat him as a lying Lord.

PRUDENS.

Evan, my strength and spirit melt away !
 I feel the evidence of what you say.
 Presumptuous wretch ! How can I hope to find
 Kindness from him, to whom I'm so unkind.
 I'll lay my hand on my offending mouth,
 And henceforth hearken to the word of truth.
 O may his Spirit fix it on my heart ;
 Whether it make me worse, or heal my smart.

But I must go : 'twill soon be dark, I see.
 To-morrow, Evan, come and dine with me,
 Make no apologies ; be sure to come ;
 That we the conversation may resume.

EVANGELICUS.

I'm sorry, Prudens, thus to part with you :
 I feel reluctant now to bid adieu.
 But if it must be so, I'll not detain
 A friend in fetters, to relieve my pain.—
 Embrace your invitation with delight ;
 So wish you, Prudens, heartily good night.

Yet,

Yet, lest we never meet on earth again,
 Remember, Jesus was for sinners slain.
 Never, O never let the gospel go,
 Whatever happen to the world below.
 'Tis this, and only this must be our hope,
 When all the movements in creation stop.
 Happy, thrice happy those, who rise and stand,
 Near to the Saviour, plac'd on his right hand.
 O may my Prudens, and his Evan there,
 A " come ye blessed of my Father" hear.
 With this desire I bid my friend adieu.
 May God, the God of peace, go home with you.

P R U D E N S.

I thank you most sincerely for your care,
 And join my hearty wishes to your prayer.

DIA.

DIALOGUE III.

ARGUMENT.

Prudens cannot think the scriptures sufficient, because professors differ so much in opinion.—Evangelicus observes that others differ as much in opinion as these.—Prudens allows it, yet wants the reason of this difference in those who profess to be led by the same Bible.—Evangelicus points out the different sorts of readers, and the ends they have in view, as reasons of this.—Prudens is satisfied, but adverts again to the Holy Ghost.—Evangelicus agrees with him, but shews that the Holy Ghost continually calls by the Bible.—Prudens wants something more.—Evangelicus illustrates the nature of grace, and of believing, by several similes; and recommends a simple dependance on the Lord Jesus Christ.—Prudens finds much hesitation, but at last, encouraged by arguments, promises, and scripture examples, he ventures to place his dependance on Jesus, and finds rest to his soul.—Evangelicus congratulates him, and gives advice with respect to his duty, and privilege; temper, and conduct. After mutual expressions of gratitude and praise, they sing an hymn, and part.

PRUDENS.

COME, Evangelicus, I thought you long,
I've one objection (and I think it strong)
To what you say about the word of God:
Not but I hold it holy, just and good,
But its sufficiency to lead aright.
I cannot be of this opinion quite:

Because

Because so many, by the scriptures guided,
Are in their sentiments so much divided.

EVANGELICUS.

Who differ more in sentiment than those
Who nothing learn but what the Spirit shews?
Who lay his revelation all aside,
And only take his motions for their guide?
These disagree, with all their light divine.
Now this objection I oppose to thine.

PRUDENS.

I own, dear Evan, you have set me fast;
And I must give the matter up at last.
But yet the reason why they differ so,
I should be glad, exceeding glad to know.
It is a subject, in my apprehension,
Which loudly calls for diligent attention.

EVANGELICUS.

'Tis one thing to allow the Bible right;
But it's another to be guided by't.
'Tis fashionable now to hold it true:
And it's the fashion to peruse it too;
Especially on Sunday in a pew.
'Tis now companion for the common-prayer:
They often live together through the year;
And both alike their gold and scarlet wear.

There's

'There's such solicitude and care about 'em;
 There's not a town, nor scarce a house without 'em.'

But how do men the sacred volume use?
 You'll find it is with very diff'rent views.

Some read it for the use of other men;
 And when they've done, they lay it down again.
 While others read because their neighbours do;
 But care not what they read, nor where, nor how.
 Some read it as their duty once a week;
 But no instruction from the Bible seek.

Some read it with design to learn to read;
 And to the subject give but little heed.

Some read it as a history, to know
 How people liv'd three thousand years ago.

Some read it for the wonders that are there;
 How David kill'd a lion, and a bear.

Some read to bring themselves into repute,
 By shewing others how they can dispute.

Some read it, or sometimes into it look,
 Because, perhaps, they've ne'er another book.

Some read it while a beam is in their eyes,
 That they may learn their neighbours to despise.

Some read because they've little else to do:
 Especially if it be bound a-new.

Some read this blessed book—they don't know why:
 It somehow happen'd in their way to lie.

Some read the Bible as a truth indeed;
 Yet understand but little what they read.

Some read to find the contradictions there ;
 To set in opposition sword and spear :
 And then with art and sophistry engage
 To lessen, and traduce the sacred page.
 Some read, but dare not their own eyes believe ;
 So put that sense upon it others give :
 For Doctor, Bishop, or his Holiness,
 Assert this is the meaning of the place.
 Some read it in a flutter, or a fright,
 As though they'd learn the whole of it to-night ;
 And if they can't obtain it ere they sleep,
 They lay it by as wonderful and deep.
 Some read as though it did not speak to them,
 But to the people at Jerusalem ;
 Those wicked men, the Gentiles and the Jews :
 And others read it as they read the news.
 Some read it peradventure out of spite.
 I fear there are but few that read it right.
 No wonder then they profit little by't.

P R U D E N S.

These many sorts of readers which you name,
 To true religion make but little claim :
 But then your sober, circumspect, devout,
 Vary as much in sentiment, I doubt,
 As those who read so carelessly, and know
 But little what the sacred scriptures shew.
 Now what the reason is I cannot see,
 That these should argue so, and disagree.

EVANGELICUS.

One reason is, as I have often thought;
They teach the Bible, are not Bible taught.

When sinners first their poverty discern ;
And find that all their labour nought will earn ;
Their souls alarm'd, and almost in despair,
Run, wildly run for treasure here and there.

They come not to the royal mint for coin ;
But take the current doctrine for divine.
Which they receive, and resolutely hold,
And prize, and weigh, as traders do their gold.

Which if it prove a little bit too light ;
They daub, and wax it, till 'tis almost weight ;
Or put it in the other scale to try't.

Thus by their art they'll make their money draw,
Which is not passable at all by law.

Which they with confidence will put away,
To busy traders on a market day.

They care not what it is, so it will pass ;
Whether 'tis gold, or only lacker'd bras :
They took it for a good one—and they know,
They mean to make it for a good one go.

These fix on doctrines, like the man of Bray,
And take that first, which passes best to-day.
They think the Bible gives them countenance,
Where it exhorts them to “ give no offence.”

But some depend upon another's credit :
Well satisfy'd if they know where they had it.

The reputation of some great divine,
 Stamps currency on his religious coin.
 His scales are good ; his care in weighing known ;
 They'll sooner trust his judgment than their own.
 If it will do for him, why then they cry,
 Sure it will do for such an one as I !

Thus some receive a creed, and rest contented,
 Who ne'er believ'd, nor properly repented :
 Yet seem religious, and perhaps devout ;
 Have got a shell, but all the kernel's out.

Others, like misers, hoard up sentiments,
 Not for their present use, but future wants ;
 So look about, with diligence and care,
 For doctrines new, and wonderful, and rare.
 These fill their coffers with religious store,
 As English Nabobs do, with Indian ore :
 And then an air of piety assume,
 Because they've riches—for the time to come.

Some make a man their head, and bow the knee
 To what that man thinks proper to decree.
 And their religion in obedience lies,
 To what he fancies prudent to devise.
 These urge the Bible too, with all their might,
 To prove their soft compliance to be right.

Some search the Scriptures, with religious views,
 But mingle, Christ and Moses ; Greeks and Jews.
 These hold the substance, and the shadow too,
 And think their composition sure to do.

They

They cannot choose but have a solid peace,
 Because, they've law and gospel; works and grace.
 With two foundations—how they look upon
 Those miserable mortals, with but one!

Some read the scriptures, carefully indeed,
 To vindicate some pre-adopted creed:
 And ev'ry passage that oppose them, bend,
 To make it answer that important end.

Another reason (may be not the least)
 Men always love religion to their taste,
 And so the bread of God is now and then
 A little sweeten'd to the taste of men.
 And such a gloss as suits their palate most,
 They think the teaching of the Holy Ghost.
 They know by blest experience it is right,
 Because they relish it with such delight.
 And though they from the letter wander wide,
 They think the Bible-meaning on their side.
 Yea, wicked men, whose life is full of sin;
 Always maintain, they're orthodox within.
 And while they wander ev'ry point astray,
 Each thinks his own belief, the scripture way.

Another reason you will often find,
 Men are so little to the truth inclin'd,
 They take a part, and leave a part behind:
 And then of consequence, each man will choose,
 Which part he means to take, and which refuse.

Some take a sandal from the Saviour's foot ;
 And then conceited—as a christian strut.
 While others barter for his seamless vest ;
 Then look upon themselves completely drest,
 Yet others care not for his robe so much,
 Quite satisfy'd if they can have a touch.
 While others at a distance, stand, and nod,
 Their cold assent, that he's the Son of God.
 Some few indeed for Jesus' body long ;
 Others want nothing but his charming tongue.
 Many will help a Joseph take him down ;
 But few receive him, with his cross and crown.
 Some prize him for his teaching ; think him wise ;
 But can't endure him as a sacrifice.
 While others take him as a priest alone,
 And care for nothing, but his dying groan.
 How many now their consolation draw
 From gospel promises, and slight the law :
 Yea, slight the Saviour, when he comes to reign,
 And count his ordinances light and vain.
 Many there are who sit in Jesu's school,
 Not with design to learn, but help him rule.
 And so they seek a learned education,
 To fit them for some reputable station.

These all would seem religious at the heart,
 And from the Bible form their creed—in part :
 But, as in ev'ry point it will not do,
 They add a little human-wisdom too.—

Yet,

Yet, they would have it to be understood,
 They form their notions from the book of God.
 But then the Bible's but a tool to these,
 To serve them when, and where, and how they please.
 And hence so many systems we behold,
 Which suit so many parties, new and old.

Yet many souls perhaps you may discern,
 Who with simplicity desire to learn :
 Yet notwithstanding all their pious care,
 Some disagreement will in these appear.
 Their disposition, company, or station ;
 But more especially their education,
 Will make, or seem to make, a variation.
 Our knowledge is but partial while we're here ;
 Nor shall we see alike till Christ appear.
 The field is wide, and track'd on ev'ry side ;
 No wonder then that travellers divide.

But all who look to Jesus as their head ;
 And live upon him as their daily bread :
 Who hear his blessed voice, and it obey,
 Shall find his grace sufficient for their day.
 Though these in circumstantial disagree ;
 They know the truth, and it has made them free.
 They're all his sheep, and though an hedge divide,
 They've but one shepherd, one unerring guide :
 Who'll take them from this wilderness below,
 To pastures where immortal pleasures grow.

Then shall they see their Saviour eye to eye ;
And all their doubts and disagreements die.

Yea, while they seem to deviate and stray,
They press for upper worlds, in Christ the way,
Their hearts unite in piety and love ;
They all aspire and reach to things above.
They all renounce themselves, and gladly own
The Lord their Saviour, and the Lord alone.
The Bible is their rule, by that they steer,
Till clouds are vanish'd, and the sun appear,

P R U D E N S.

Evan, you've given reasons quite enow !
I wonder not to see them differ now.
For while they seek to vindicate a creed,
The mind is strongly bias'd while they read,
I must confess, the precious book of God,
A fine display of everlasting good :
But yet, except the Holy Ghost attend,
Sinners the truth can never apprehend,

E V A N G E L I C U S.

Here, Prudens, I agree ; I freely own
The Holy Ghost the agent, he alone, *

But

* Though I freely admit the Holy Ghost to be the sole agent ; I do not admit of man being intirely passive. The sun is the great source of light to the rational and animal creation ; yet they are not obliged to imbibe all his glory, but

But can we hope his agency to feel,
If we resist his counsel or his will ?
And if we search aright, will he deny,
To any soul, his blessed agency ?

Let but a man obey the Saviour's call ;
And come to Jesus ; trust him as his all :
And tell me, Prudens, if the Holy Ghost
Will suffer such a person to be lost ?

P R U D E N S.

Dear Evangelicus, I'll never say,
That those shall perish, who the call obey.
All that I mean to urge is very clear,
That he must call, before the man can hear.
And when he does not call ; the man must wait,
With watchfulness, and patience, at his gate.

E V A N G E L I C U S.

But when, dear Prudens, tell your Evan when
The Holy Spirit ceas'd to cry to men ?

He

but can run to the cooling shade, to evade the force of his fervent heat. In some such manner, the Holy Ghost appears to be the agent, or the promoter of all spiritual good ; but men can hate him, evade him, resist him, grieve him, quench him, by running into amusements, business, company, sin ; and thereby render all his grace abortive, and bring on themselves swift destruction. See John iii. 18—22. Acts vii. 51. 2 Peter ii. 1.

He calls incessantly to all mankind :
But where must they expect his calls to find ?

P R U D E N S.

Certainly, Evan, in their heart and mind.

E V A N G E L I C U S.

Permit me here a simile to bring :
Perhaps it may elucidate the thing.
A rebel under condemnation lies :—
A letter comes, which fills him with surprize :—
His Majesty, affected with his case,
Grants him a pardon, by an act of grace :
Provided he'll receive it at his hand ;
Sentence against him shall no longer stand.—
Would he refuse to hear the letter read,
Or call it insignificant, or dead ;
And wait, and pray for something more than this,
To give him surer ground of happiness ?
No, with delight and pleasure in his eye,
He'd part with all, the blessing to enjoy !
He'd want no testimony more, or better,
Than the King's seal affixed to the letter.
His fears would vanish like the shades of night,
Just on the rising of the source of light.
The strong emotions he would feel within,
To heav'nly raptures would be near akin.
Howe'er the letter came, if but apply'd,
It saves the criminal, who must have dy'd.

What

What executioner dare strike the blow,
While he's the pardon of his King to show?
'Tis not his int'rest to dispute its power;
But keep it safe, that he may be secure.

Art thou condemn'd; expos'd to misery?
Then God transmits a pardon down to thee!
Just like the King in the preceding case,
He sends a letter to reveal his grace;
Which proves his great compassion, and thy need,
And leaves it with thee to peruse, and read:
With strong assurances of endless glory,
If thou believe the letter set before thee;
Which is so evidenc'd, within, without,
It scarce admits the shadow of a doubt.
Yet Prudens (I reflect on it with pain)
Wants God to come to make the matter plain;
And ventures, when he hears the letter read,
To vilify it with the name of dead.

Now is the precious book of God, a thing,
More dead than such a letter from a King?
Can *this* keep executioners in awe;
And *that* no force to either drive, or draw?
Can *this* appoint to life, or doom to die;
And *that* no power to give thee peace, or joy?

Prudens, be wise! Consider well thy state!
Receive the Saviour, ere it be too late!
The rebel, if not pardon'd by his King,
Must soon behold the gallows and the string.

And you, if you reject the offer'd grace,
Will soon be in a miserable case !

But once again behold the pardon'd man,
And let my Prudens imitate his plan :
Darkness comes on, and sleep assaults his eyes ;
He dreams the pardon is a heap of lies—
Starting he wakes, in terrible surprize ! }
What must he do to ease his anxious breast—
Go to his heart to look ? or in his chest ?
The *letter* and the *evidences* there,
Are *all* he seeks, to dissipate his fear.
If (when deliver'd from his dark abode)
A neighbour meet him, trudging on the road :
In such a case, what can he have to say ?
The *letter*, Prudens, is his *only* plea.

If at the last he must in court appear,
What dost thou think would be his refuge there ?
Would he depend the issue of his cause
Upon his feelings, innocence, or laws ?
The *letter* from his King, and that alone,
Would make him look with courage to the throne.

Now if you want the voice of God to hear ;
Look in your Bible, and you'll find it there.
But if you this neglect, to look within ;
You'll meet with disappointment, pain, and sin.

P R U D E N S.

I thank you for the simile you bring ;
But think it fails in one important thing.

If you remember, when the pardon came,
 The criminal was mention'd there by name.
 Now this is what I want, and without this,
 It seems improbable I should have peace :
 Unless I can some testimony find,
 That I'm the very person there design'd.

EVANGELICUS.

If many individuals offend ;
 And George to some of them his grace extend ;
 'Tis proper then their names should be express'd,
 That these may be distinguish'd from the rest :
 But, if a colony of men revolt,
 And high, and low, are equally in fault ;
 According to the law, they all must die :
 But George beholds them with a tender eye :
 Determin'd they shall have an option still,
 Without distinction ; whosoever will.
 He sends a proclamation through the coast,
 Convey'd by special messengers, and post :
 That all within a stipulated space,
 Who wish to be partakers of his grace,
 May meet an officer, that he shall fix,
 And have a pardon — sign'd, *Georgius Rex.*

Now what would Prudens do in such a case ?
 He'd read the proclamation, and embrace
 The offer'd kindness without hesitation,
 Tho' he ne'er found his name i'th' proclamation.

The

The call being general, he would conclude
His title to the benefit was good.

Thus, my dear Prudens, sinners all revolt.
Mankind are universally in fault.
There's no exception—all as rebels lie;
And all expos'd eternally to die.
But God, the great, the universal King;
From whom all blessings, all enjoyments spring;
Saw with compassion his revolting race,
And sent the Saviour with an act of grace.
Publish'd it through the world by proclamation,
That all might hear it, and obtain salvation.

The offer still is made to all mankind.
Look in your Bible, its contents to find.

PRUDENS.

Evan, if what you intimate be there,
I'll thank you kindly if you'll tell me where.

EVANGELICUS.

The gospel is a proclamation, sent
To bring rebellious creatures to repent;
To turn to God, from whom they run astray;
Points them to Jesus, as the only way.
Go (faith the Saviour, full of truth and grace)
And preach the gospel to the human race:
To every creature bear the happy news;
Publish salvation to the Greeks and Jews.

All are alike the workmanship of God.
 All are alike the purchase of my blood.
 All are alike the objects of my care.
 Go preach the gospel, that they all may hear.
 He that believes, and is baptiz'd, shall be
 Sav'd from the horrors of despair—but he
 That stupidly rejects the offer'd grace,
 Shall in perdition have his dwelling place !

The joyful sound has reach'd the British shore :
 Prudens has heard it, heard it o'er and o'er.
 Receive the proclamation as to thee ;
 Depend upon it with simplicity.
 While wise and prudent look for something more ;
 Embrace the privilege, and God adore !

PRUDENS.

You charm me, Evan, as you go along,
 With arguments so num'rous, plain, and strong :
 I feel a kind of violence attend them ;
 I hardly can, I hardly dare withstand them.
 I certainly should venture, did I know,
 That thus to venture on the Lord would do.

EVANGELICUS.

Venture, dear Prudens ! thou hast nought to fear :
 No flaming fword forbids thy entrance here !
 It cannot be presumption to obey ;
 Those are presumptuous that dare keep away.

The

The offer is so full, so kind, so free,
 To sinners such, exactly such as thee ;
 'Tis past the power and art of hell, to prove
 Thy soul rejected by a God of love.

See how the calls of inspiration run,
 Like beams of glory darted from the sun :
 And all conspire, by evidence divine,
 To console a trembling soul like thine.

“ Ho ! every one that thirsts, Jehovah cries,
 “ Come to the fountain which my grace supplies ;
 “ Here's milk and wine, as air and water free ;
 “ Eat, O my friends ! yea, drink abundantly.”

The choicest blessings you can want below,
 The God of glory offers to bestow.
 Hear how he calls, and calls this very day ;
 And blames the prodigals who keep away.
 Can there be danger if the sinner come,
 The God of love will send him empty home ?
 Would he with such divine compassion call,
 If he design'd the ruin of thy soul ?

P R U D E N S.

With pleasure, Evan, I behold the grace
 Of God the Father, to the human race :
 But I could wish to feel his grace within,
 Compose my spirit, and subdue my sin.
 I fear, while I unsanctify'd remain,
 A confidence in Jesus would be vain.

EVANGELICUS.

Can you be happy, while you keep away ?
 Can you be holy, while you disobey ?
 Can you be sanctify'd, and free from sin,
 While you reject the method to be clean ?
 However pure the water, free and fresh ;
 'Tis all as nothing till you drink and wash.
 However rich and elegant the treat ;
 What is it to the man that will not eat !
 He never can be vigorous and strong,
 By looking only, look he e'er so long :
 But if he drink the wine, and eat the food,
 He'll then experience that it does him good.

Thus the great feast the King of Glory makes,
 Only supports the sinner that partakes.
 A Jesus *seen* will do thee little good ;
 Those who *receive* him, are the sons of God.
 How can you feel the Saviour's love and grace ;
 'Till you the Saviour and his truth embrace ?

PRUDENS.

Right, my dear Evan, what you say is true :
 I cannot help but acquiesce with you.
 But don't we read of many in the word,
 Who came and own'd him with a double Lord ?
 And yet the Prince of Glory bid them go
 Down to the regions of eternal woe.

H

If

If I should come—and this should be my case—
I'd rather, Eyan, never see his face.

EVANGELICUS.

Those whom the Saviour banish'd from his gate,
Ne'er sought to enter till it was too late :
No wonder then that these were sent away,
To rue the consequence of their delay.
Let Prudens then be sure to come in time,
Lest he be guilty of their fatal crime.
Come to the Saviour, even if you doubt ;
You can but perish, if he shut you out.
But hear the Lord, for he can answer best,
" Come unto me, and I will give you rest."
Believe him, Prudens, and to Jesus go :
Try if the Lord will give you rest, or no.

PRUDENS.

Can you produce a precedent to shew,
That such a coming to the Lord will do ?

EVANGELICUS.

Behold the publican approach to God—
Nay, at a distance he poor sinner stood ;
Not choosing to lift up his guilty eyes,
But afar off for pardoning mercy cries.—
His great petition did his God deride ?
No—he's accepted, pardon'd, justify'd.

See

See next the woman with a bloody sore,
 Who spent her living to obtain a cure,
 But all in vain—her malady grew worse,
 With the new torments of an empty purse.
 She heard the fame of Jesus—and appears ;
 But as she came, she met a croud of fears.
 She dares not come her matter to propose,
 But slyly touch'd the border of his cloaths.
 Astonish'd, she the efficacy found !
 The Saviour's virtue heal'd the bleeding wound.

Thus came the sinner to the Saviour, when
 Simon the pharisee had took him in;
 Not with a bold and elevated chest,
 To sit at table as a welcome guest ;
 But humble and repentant, she appears,
 Silent behind him with a flood of tears.
 The haughty pharisee could scarcely bear,
 That such a guilty creature should be there :
 But Jesus, glad to see the sinner come,
 Commends, forgives, and sends her joyful home.

But let me ask my friend, and let him say,
 How any man can come another way ?
 Don't all who hear the blessed Saviour's call,
 Come at a venture, if they come at all ?
 Must they not run the risk, if risk there be,
 And venture all for gospel liberty ?
 The soul who stays till every thing is fit,
 Will surely fall into the burning pit.

The shipwreck'd mariner, when tempests roar,
Will hazard ALL to reach the peaceful shore :
A peradventure of security,
Will make him plunge into the boiling sea.

Thus, Prudens, we, when dreadful terrors seize us,
By venturesome believing, fly to Jesus.
Sometimes with trembling we approach the throne,
And often labour with a heart of stone,
And nought can utter but a sigh or groan.
No dawn of hope from other part appears ;
Without are fightings, and within are fears :
But this alleviates our every doubt,
The Lord has promis'd not to cast us out.
This gives encouragement in each distress,
To come to Jesus—trust his faithfulness.

O ! strive to enter at this narrow gate ;
And strive to enter, ere it be too late !
With violence thy enemies oppose,
And with the offer of salvation close.
Thy right to Jesus does not spring from thee,
But from the grant divine—salvation free.
Whoever will, are welcome to receive,
Because, the God of love will freely give.

Look not within for proper feelings there,
But to the Saviour, who thy sins did bear.
Place all thy confidence alone in him,
Who came from heaven, and suffer'd to redeem.

Without

Without reserve cast all thy cares upon
 The blessed Jesus, God's eternal Son,
 There thou may'st rest secure, securely dwell,
 And triumph over all the fears of hell.
 If Jesus could not set the sinner free ;
 Think, Prudens, why he suffer'd on the tree ?

P R U D E N S.

Enough, dear Evan ! I'll no longer stay !
 Charm'd with the Saviour, I his voice obey !
 Blest be his name ! I see his tender care,
 In all he wrought, in all he suffer'd here.
 His goodness is sufficiently display'd ;
 I'll trust him, and no longer be afraid !
 He dy'd to save me from eternal fire :
 What more can he perform, or I desire ?

Jesus, Redeemer, lo ! I come to thee !
 Vile as I am, for whither should I flee !
 Encourag'd by thy word, thy oath, thy blood ;
 I cleave to thee, my refuge and my God.
 The offices which thou art pleas'd to bear,
 Thy admirable fitness all declare.
 A captain, strong to conquer all my foes.
 Firm as a rock, on which I may repose.
 A refuge to the sinner in distress.
 To my dark soul, the sun of righteousness.
 A great high priest, for sin to satisfy.
 Eternal life, to rebels doom'd to die.

The bread of God, on which my soul may feed ;
 Thy flesh is meat, thy blood is drink indeed !
 A friend, to such as have no friend beside :
 And such a friend, as never fail'd when try'd.

O ! be a friend to save and succour me !
 I place my whole dependance, Lord, on thee.
 Take me, dear Jesus ! all I have is thine ;
 By right of covenant, by right divine.
 Extend thy mercy to the guilty soul,
 That humbly comes in virtue of thy call.

Art thou a shepherd ? Then dear Jesus be
 A shepherd to a worthless worm like me :
 I hear thy voice, and wish to follow thee.
 Give me a place within thy blessed fold,
 Till I thy face in glory shall behold.
 Astonishing ! shall I at last arise,
 And see my Saviour, with my ravish'd eyes ?
 Will he not only save my soul from hell,
 But raise the sinner with himself to dwell ?

Help me, dear Evan ! to extol his name !
 Help me his grace, his glory, to proclaim !
 Help me to build a monument of praise
 To my Redeemer, through eternal days !

EVANGELICUS.

Most gladly, Prudens, I your wish obey.
 Glory to God for this auspicious day !

Long

Long have I mourn'd to see your anxious grief:
 Long have I labour'd to afford relief.
 Now all my wishes are completely crown'd:
 My pleasures now past utterance abound,
 Because my friend has consolation found.
 O ! may the happiness you now enjoy,
 Last, and increase, through all eternity ! — }

P R U D E N S.

I thank you, Evan, for your kind regard :
 May all your labour meet a full reward.
 Your friendship is so great, I can't express,
 How much I love you for your faithfulness.
 I hope I never, never shall forget,
 How much I stand in my dear Evan's debt.

But Jesus is the friend that I adore :
 O ! that I could but love and praise him more !
 Such patient kindness he to me hath shown ;
 Surely would soften any heart of stone :
 And yet so hard, so obstinate was I,
 I durst not on his tenderness rely.

He might with justice, many years ago,
 Have spurn'd me down to everlasting woe :
 But pity, tender pity made him wait,
 And still continue knocking at my gate.
 Dear Evangelicus ! you cannot tell,
 How much I owe, that I am out of hell !

O ! how shall I my future moments spend,
 Most to the pleasure of my blessed friend.
 Tell me, dear Evan, you have known him long ;
 I hate the very thought of doing wrong.
 Tell me the way that he shall most approve,
 While through this thorny wilderness I move.
 O ! what a thing, a dreadful thing 'twill be,
 If I dishonour him, who dy'd for me !

EVANGELICUS.

Go on rejoicing in the Lord, go on,
 Stand fast in Jesus, as you have begun.
 Abide in him, and he'll abide in you ;
 And make you vigorous, and fruitful too.
 Should friends allure, or enemies deride ;
 Be sure you stedfast in the Lord abide.
 This is your life ; the whole of your supply :
 Without it you will wither, droop and die.
 You can do nothing that is truly good,
 But as you hold communion with your God.
 But if you still continue in the Lord ;
 Live to his honour—keep his faithful word ;
 With confidence you may approach the throne,
 Ask what you will—and Christ will see it done.
 God is the blessed husbandman, and he
 Receives a glory from the fruitful tree.
 But if his cultivation be in vain,
 Who, my dear Prudens, can advantage gain ?

The

The fruitless vine's no better than the brier :
They both alike are fuel for the fire.

Remember your Redeemer's love, and shew
That love to others, he has shewn to you.
This Jesus thought important to enjoin,
By precept, laid on precept ; line, on line.
O ! let no accident, no time efface,
This sacred test, this evidence of grace.
The noblest gifts without it are, alas !
But tinkling cymbals, or a sounding brass.
A man may boast of knowledge, faith, and joys :
Where love is wanting, all is empty noise.

Christ is your Master—then his word obey :
Let him appoint your work—your wages pay.
Whatever you discover as his will,
Be ready, zealous, patient, to fulfil.
'Tis not a servant's privilege to choose,
This to perform, the other to refuse :
However small it may appear to sense,
The master's will gives it a consequence.
How many flatter him, and call him Lord ;
Yet slight his counsel, trample on his word !
Let your example testify abroad,
How much you prize the institutes of God.

If you desire a settled peace within,
Maintain the fight against the flesh and sin.
Pleasure and honour, avarice and pride,
Can boast their thousands cruelly destroy'd.

These

These tyrant lusts, unless you keep them down,
 Will murder all your peace, and wear the crown.
 Fight the good fight of faith ; be valiant, bold ;
 Jesus, your Captain, will his cause uphold :
 Not with the carnal weapons, bow and sword ;
 But with his Holy Spirit, and his word.

Put on the armor Jesus recommends,
 Which all subdues, and ev'ry part defends.
 So may you fight and conquer, when your foes
 The way of truth and holiness oppose.

To know your duty—read the book of God :
 For strength to do it—drink your Saviour's blood.
 For wisdom—supplicate the King of kings.
 For safety—hide you underneath his wings.
 In all distresses, to your Saviour fly :
 Anxious for nothing—faithful till you die.
 Your carnal understanding lay aside ;
 In all your ways, acknowledge him your guide.
 He will direct your paths, while here you stay ;
 Till you arise to everlasting day.
 There shall you see your Saviour, face to face ;
 Sing of his mercy, and adore his grace :
 While crouds of blissful spirits wait around,
 In robes immortal, and with glory crown'd ;
 Happy beyond expression, to behold
 Another sheep admitted to the fold.

Then, what supreme delight will Prudens fill,
 The moment he arrives at Zion's hill.

When

When Jesus feasts him with immortal bread,
 And puts a crown of glory on his head.
 Grants him to sit upon his royal throne;
 Gives him a kingdom; makes it all his own.
 Eternity before him full of joy;
 Without a respite for a single sigh.

O ! love the Lord, and call upon his name :
 Live to his honour ; let your life proclaim
 Your gratitude to Jesus—till you rise,
 To full possession of eternal joys.

But, night approaches in her sable hue :—
 Evan once more must bid his friend adieu.

PRUDENS.

Evan, I almost stagger when I see
 What precious promises are made to me.
 I stretch my arms, and stretch my arms again ;
 I strive to grasp them, but 'tis all in vain :
 A finite mind can never weigh aright,
 The joys, and glories, which are infinite.
 O ! that I may be diligent, and wise,
 To run with patience till I reach the prize.—
 I quite approve the counsel which you give :
 I wish, and hope to take it whilst I live.

But, ere you go, I've one petition more
 To add to all which I have made before :
 A favour which my Evan can't deny—
 'Tis to remember such a wretch as I

Before

Before the mercy-seat.—

O ! plead for me, with all your power and skill,
That I may persevere !—my nature still
I feel corrupt.—My enemies are strong,
And easily may draw, or drive me wrong.
Entangled in the cares of life, I stand
On slippery ground.—I find, on ev'ry hand,
Temptations to the evils which I hate :—
But Evan knows the nature of my state.

E V A N G E L I C U S.

Desires like yours, I cannot but obey :
What so delightful as to praise, and pray
To him who is so generous and free !—
I hope that Prudens will remember me.

But, let not Evan pray for you alone ;
You have a right to make your trials known.
You have an able advocate in heaven,
Who bids you ask, and says it shall be given.

Pray without ceasing—What a kind command !
A fortress, and a magazine at hand ;
Where you may hide you, and be furnish'd too ;
Secure from danger, and be arm'd a-new.
When baffled out, and to appearance slain,
A fervent prayer recovers life again.

But guard against an unbelieving fear ;
God is your friend, and he is always near.

Fear

Fear not your foes, though terrible to face,
 While you've a father, and a throne of grace.
 His goodness, like his glory, is unknown ;
 Or he would ne'er have sacrific'd his son.
 Let this engage you on him to rely ;
 He that gave Jesus—what can he deny ?

P R U D E N S.

Dear Evan, I esteem you more and more :
 I long have lov'd you, but I ne'er before
 Had so much reason.—Heartily farewell !
 May God, and Jesus, ever with you dwell.

But yet indulge me—it will not be late—
 Before you leave me, join to celebrate
 The praise of Jesus ; for I love to hear
 His precious name—'tis music to mine ear ;
 It warms my heart, and dissipates my fear.

H Y M N.

32 34 31

H Y M N.

JESUS, holy, lovely Jesus ;
 All in all to such as we !
 When infernal terrors seize us,
 We a refuge find in thee.

When our sins aloud were calling
 For the vengeance of a God ;
 Lo ! instead of vengeance falling,
 Jesus bought us with his blood.

Love like his in vain we're seeking ;
 Love which could such woes endure.
 When was cross, or altar reeking
 With a Saviour's blood before.

When we trifled with the favour,
 And rejected all his grace ;
 O ! how patient was the Saviour !
 Love beheld our wretched case.

Jesus still renew'd the offer ;
 Held the pardon in his hand :
 Urging us to take the proffer,
 Till we could no more withstand.

Praise, eternal praise be given,
 To the great Redeemer's name !
 All on earth, and all in heaven,
 Shout, for ever shout his fame.

12 MR 58
 T H E E N D.

E R R A T A.

Page 38. line 3. *for everlastiag* read everlasting.

- 57. 14. *for Covince* read Convince.
- 71. 4. *for benefits* read benefit.
- 89. 20. *for message* read gospel.
- 91. 22. *for thunder* read thunders.
- 107. 12. *for set* read spread.

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